佐武と市捕物控 10

═七福神═

石森章太郎

SHOGAKUKAN BUNKO

■幸福をもたらすはずの七福神が、死を運んで来た。昆沙門天、夷、弁財天と次々に殺されて行く。下手人は残された布袋、大黒天、寿老人、福禄寿の中にいる。又、七福神の像の中に隠された地図は何を意味するのか。糸をたぐる佐武と市の前に、新たに五年前の黄金強盗の事件が浮かび上がつて来た。

デザイン　上井ヒロテル
カバー装画　角田純男

佐武と市捕物控 10
石森章太郎

280
小学館文庫
330

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石森章太郎

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—七福神—

石森章太郎

小学館文庫

佐武と市捕物控 10

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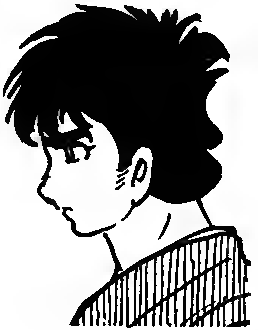
小学館文庫

Shogakukan Bunkos
Sabu and Ichi's
Detective Stories
Volume 10
By Shotaro Ishinomori



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Sabu and Ichi's Detective Stories Volume 10 Contents

Chapter 57: Seven Gods of Fortune
Chapter 58: The Severed Doll Head
Chapter 59: The Cornered Rat Bites the Cat...
Chapter 60: Pickpocket
Chapter 61: Palanquin in the Rain
Chapter 62: Floating Lanterns
Chapter 63: Needle

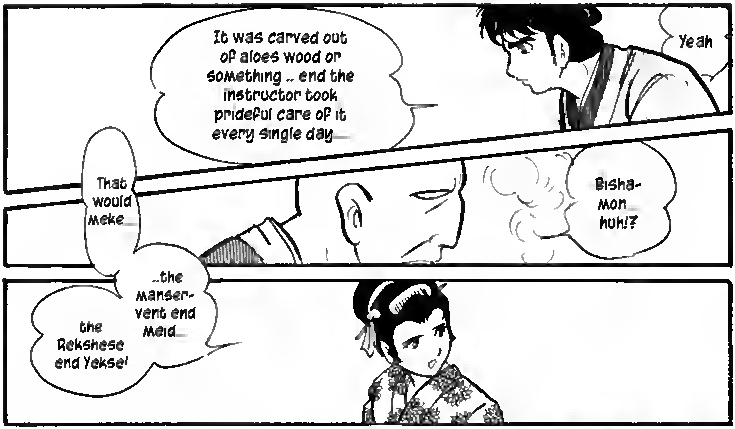
Cover Illustration by Gen'ichi Takise

Chapter 57: Seven Gods of Fortune

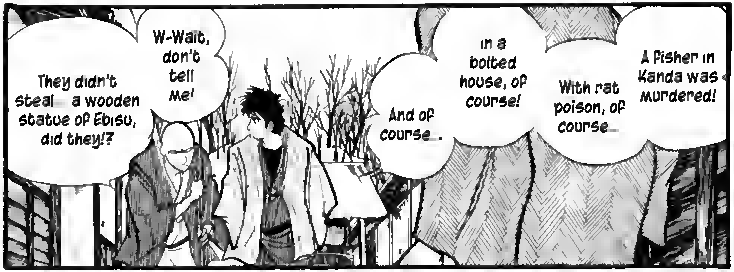
Welcome back
What's going on here, Sabu?
Why'd Mr. Tanabe call you out on New Year's...?
A murder!
A fencing instructor in Otowa was killed

Hah...
But he does.
He doesn't really need the extraordinary Sabu of Ryorizumi Temple when the murder occurred in Obowa, does he...?
...But...
Getting murdered at the start of a new year!
Oh, my!
What an unfortunate man he must have been!
The manservant and maid who committed the crime got away.
Don't fret, there's no rat poison in it!
Here, have a warm New Year's dish
Thank you
...The fencing instructor... was killed by slipping rat poison into his mouth in his sleep...
Yeah...
The manservant and maid... Oh, they've already figured out the perpetrators!?
And then the menservant and the maid, who were there when we got there
Which would mean it had to have been an inside job
And .. there wasn't a single footprint on the fresh snow around the house
...Every door in the house was bolted shut from the inside.

...They probably figured they'd pass the suspicion...
How should I know?
I don't think they're that dumb.
They killed their master.
But why didn't the manservant and maid run away right after the murder!?
There's something that seems off... Well, why a fencing instructor would bolt all his doors every night is strange...
But... hold on a second.
That's... how we know!
We're nowhere to be found!
The fencing instructor's wife said...
Yeah, that's the part I can't figure out.
Well, even so... What was their motive...?
Here, have some tea.
Well, they're dumb enough to murder their own master!
that nothing of value seems to have been taken, except...
the wooden statue of Bishamon was gone.
Of Bisha-mon!?

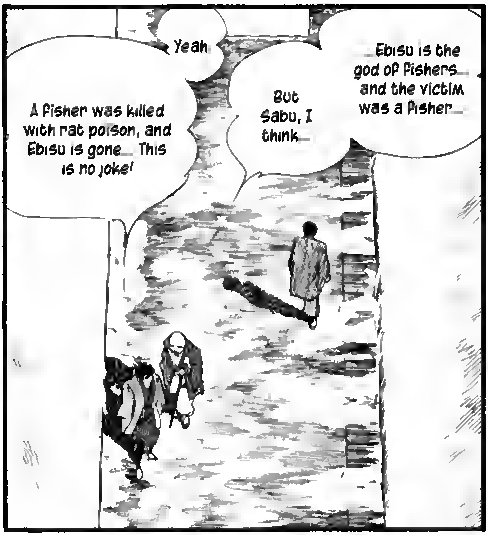

Yeah
It was carved out of aloes wood or something -- and the instructor took pridefui care of it every single day...
Bisha-mon... huh!?
That would meke...
...the manser-vent and meid...
the Rekshese end Yekse!

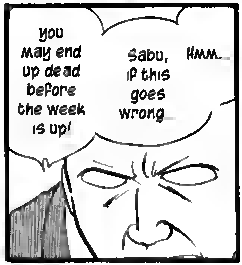
JANUARY 2ND
Huh?
I meen,
Well, Bishemon hed two retainers named Rakshasa and Yaksa!
if the instructor, e skilled swordsmen, is Bishemon...
Despite being one of the Seven Gods of Fortune!
Sigh, that instructor... seems more end more unlucky!


They didn't steal a wooden statue of Ebisu, did they!?
W-Wait, don't tell me!
And of course...
In a bolted house, of course!
With rat poison, of course...
A fisher in Kanda was murdered!

How could you tell...!?
Im-pressive, Ichi!
That's exactly what they did.

.....


Yeah
A fisher was killed with rat poison, and Ebisu is gone... This is no joke!
But Sabu, I think...
...Ebisu is the god of fishers... and the victim was a fisher...


You may end up dead before the week is up!
Sabu, if this goes wrong...
Hmm...

JANUARY 3RD
Today it was a rice dealer in Ushigome...
Ahhhh!
It'll probably be Hotei or Benzai tomorrow!
.....
are Jurojin, Fukurokuju, Hotei, and Benzai...!
The only ones left...
This is turning out just like you predicted!
...God-dam-mit!
and a wooden carving of Daikoku was stolen...!?
The doors were closed, and he was poisoned...
.....

"THE SEVEN GODS OF FORTUNE"

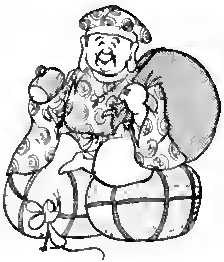
THIS TITLE REFERRED TO SEVEN GODS WHO WERE BELIEVED TO BRING FORTUNE AND PROSPERITY. GENERALLY THIS REFERS TO EBISU, DAIKOKU, HOTEI, JUROJIN, FUKUROKUJU, BISHAMON, AND BENZAI, BUT AS JUROJIN IS ANOTHER NAME FOR THE GOD FUKUROKUJU, HE IS SOMETIMES REPLACED BY KISSHO OR SHOJO.

THEY ARE A JAPANESE COMBINATION OF VARIOUS HINDU AND CHINESE BELIEFS, INCLUDING THE SEVEN SAGES OF THE BAMBOO GROVE OF CHINA... (FROM THE WORLD COLOR ENCYCLOPEDIA, PUBLISHED BY SHOGAKUKAN)

● JUROJIN (GOD OF LONGEVITY)

● EBISU (GOD OF FISHERS)

● FUKUROKUJU (OTHER NAME OF JUROJIN)



● DAIKOKU (GOD OF THE KITCHEN)

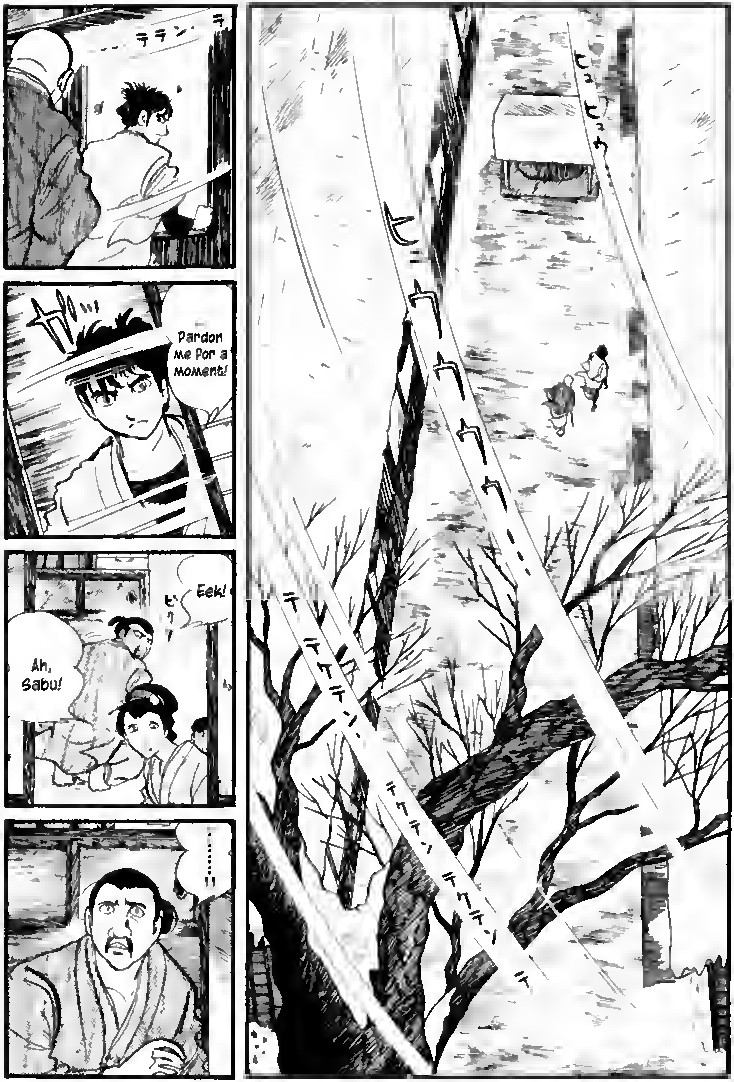
● BENZAI (GODDESS OF POETRY, MUSIC, HAPPINESS, AND PROSPERITY OF DESCENDANTS)

● BISHAMON (GOD OF WAR)

● HOTEI (GOD OF FORTUNE-TELLING)

JANUARY 4TH
A woman who taught ballads while running a small restaurant in Asakusa...!
...It was Benzai!
...And she was murdered the same way as the others!
.....
So we've figured out that the key to solving the mystery is in the wooden statues of the Seven Gods of Fortune...
But that just makes it all the more...
And there's no leads on Rakshasa and Yaska.
This is an awful New Year's!
I'd love to have Hotei, the god who can tell fortunes, divine this for us.

Hmm!?
Who's there!?
Master Yasuhiro!?
What!?
A fortune-teller!
Hey, Sabu!
You're not saying ...!?


テテテテ…
Pardon me for a moment!
Eek!
ヒッ!
Ah, Sabu!
……!!
ピュピュー…
ヒューヒューヒューヒュー…
テテテテ

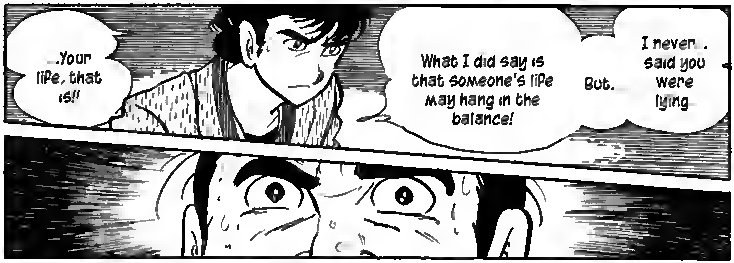
...May I have a word with you, Mr. Yasuhiro?
Huh?
Yes, concerning what!?
...Why don't you prove to me... whether or not I'm wrong!?
You were... eavesdropping on our conversation before you ran away, weren't you?
And... that thing you're hiding behind your back... It's a wooden statue of Hotei!
Am I correct?
U...Uh, no...
T-That's... wrong!!
A... Ahh... Uhh...
Dear!?

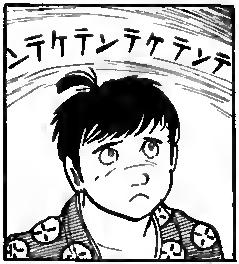
テケテンテケ
テテン
Uhh...
...I knew it!!
I-It's true. I was... eaves-dropping on your con-versation.
A-And I was so Fright-ened...
A-And the reason was that actually...
I myself... had this statue of Hotei that I bought from Kobutoya... So...

From Kotsu-toya ...?
Hmpf
You're sure about that, Yasuhiro?
Would you mind...
if I looked at that!?
A-A-A... Are you suggesting that I'm lying ..!?
W-Why would you..
You shouldn't mind letting us see it for a moment..
...If you really bought that at Kotsu-toya...
Urk!
I'm sorry ..
B... But of course ...
Huh?
Is that true, Dear!?
There are people being murdered left and right who have the statues of the Seven Gods of Fortune...
But .. As you may have heard before ..

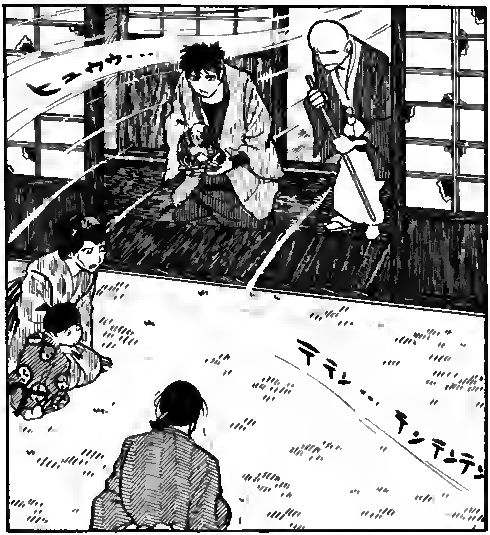
Ahh...
Ichi, I found something strange in Hotei's stomach!
It seems.. like a fragment of a map... but I don't know what of!
I see. .. Oh, .. I'm starting to piece this together!
I-I don't. . I don't know anything!
I swear ...!!

I-I-I just happened to find this statue of Hotei at Kotsutoya!!
And I found this inside of it...
A-And I figured it must be something important...
I-It's true, I tell you!!


I never said you were lying.
But...
What I did say is that someone's life may hang in the balance!
...Your life, that is!!


ンテケテンテケテンテ

テケテン
テンテン

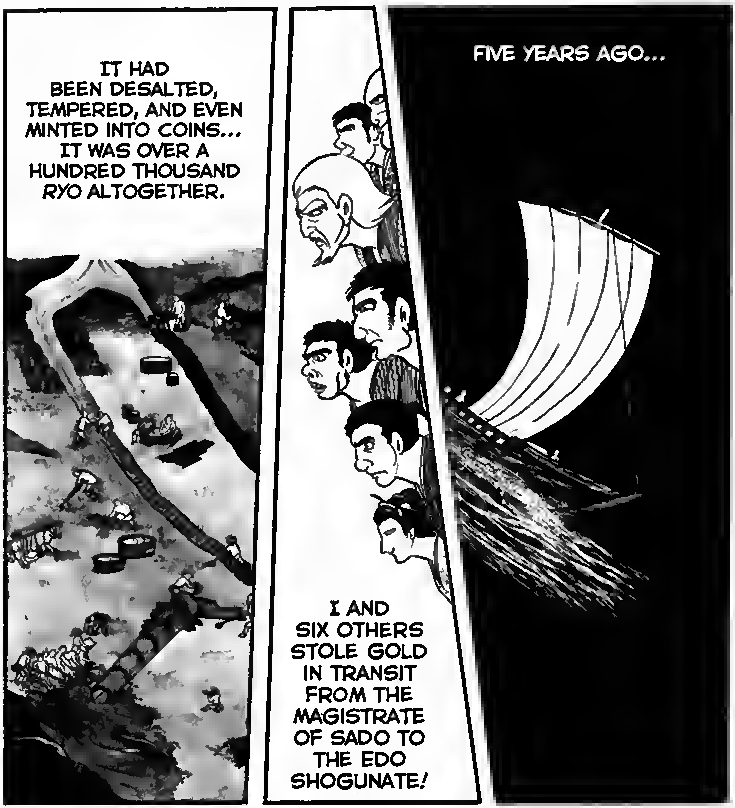

ヒュウウ…
テン…テンテンテン

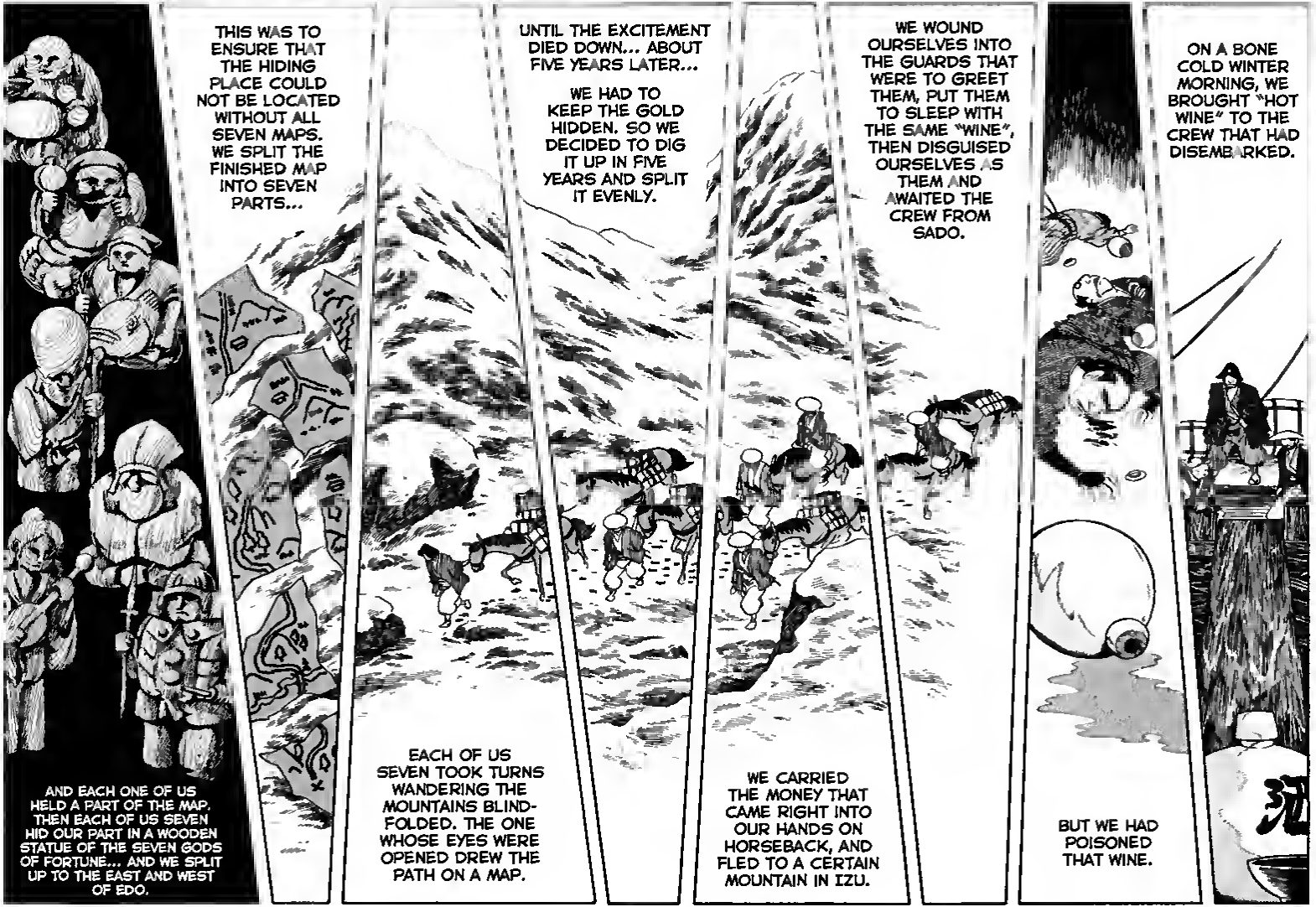
テテンテン
テケテンテケテレ
テンテレ

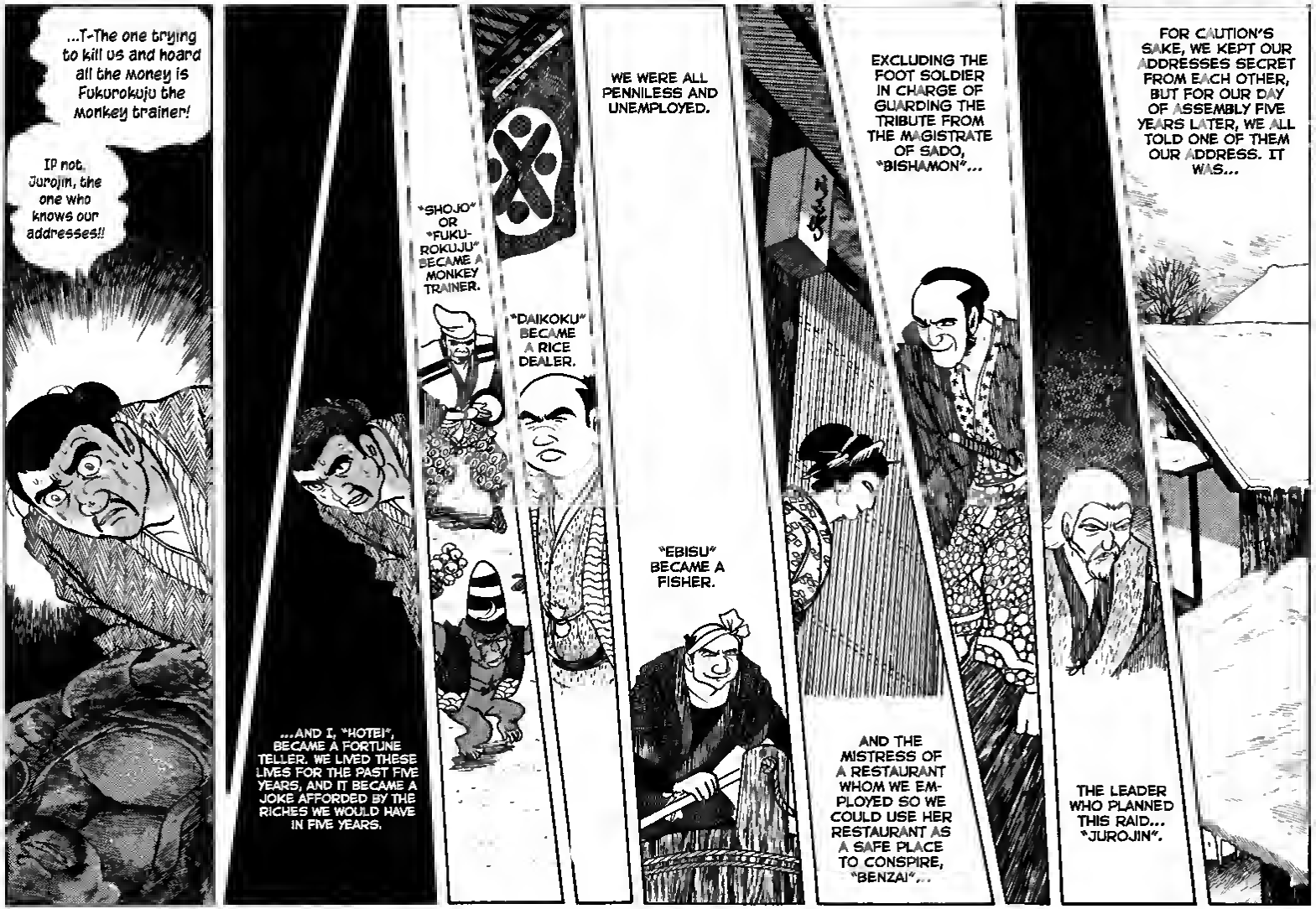
Eeeeeeek!
Get up, Saburo!
It's a monkey!
O... Oh!
I get it now!

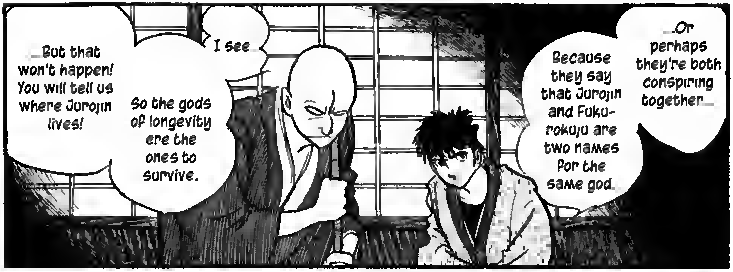
It was taught... the fragrance of the wood...
And then,
...and trained to steal the statues!
...Then it put the rat poison on its finger into the victim's mouth.
As long as it had space for its head!
A monkey could sneak into a bolted house..
Why didn't I this before!?
A-A-Ahhh..
Dam-mit..!!
No more trying to play dumb!
You know exactly who the murderer is!
Yasu-hiro!
...Al-right, you're going to tell us every-thing.

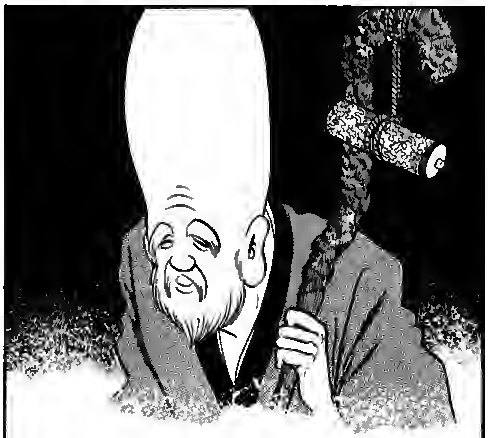
H-He tried to steal from me!
H-He...
wanted the treasure all for himself!!!


FIVE YEARS AGO...
I AND SIX OTHERS STOLE GOLD IN TRANSIT FROM THE MAGISTRATE OF SADO TO THE EDO SHOGUNATE!
IT HAD BEEN DESALTED, TEMPERED, AND EVEN MINTED INTO COINS... IT WAS OVER A HUNDRED THOUSAND RYO ALTOGETHER.

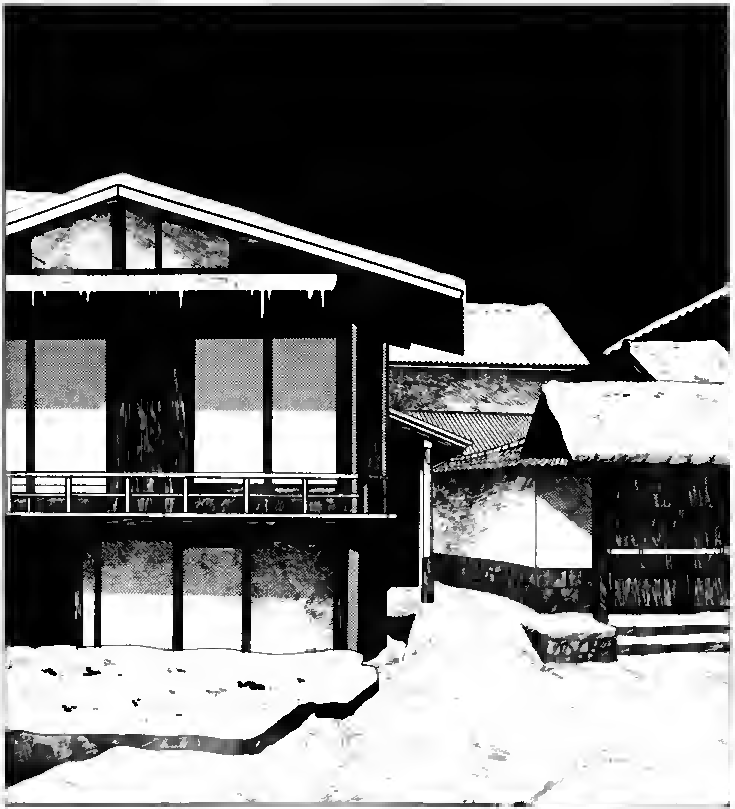

AND EACH ONE OF US HELD A PART OF THE MAP. THEN EACH OF US SEVEN HID OUR PART IN A WOODEN STATUE OF THE SEVEN GODS OF FORTUNE... AND WE SPLIT UP TO THE EAST AND WEST OF EDO.
THIS WAS TO ENSURE THAT THE HIDING PLACE COULD NOT BE LOCATED WITHOUT ALL SEVEN MAPS. WE SPLIT THE FINISHED MAP INTO SEVEN PARTS...
EACH OF US SEVEN TOOK TURNS WANDERING THE MOUNTAINS BLINDFOLDED. THE ONE WHOSE EYES WERE OPENED DREW THE PATH ON A MAP.
UNTIL THE EXCITEMENT DIED DOWN... ABOUT FIVE YEARS LATER...
WE HAD TO KEEP THE GOLD HIDDEN. SO WE DECIDED TO DIG IT UP IN FIVE YEARS AND SPLIT IT EVENLY.
WE CARRIED THE MONEY THAT CAME RIGHT INTO OUR HANDS ON HORSEBACK, AND FLED TO A CERTAIN MOUNTAIN IN IZU.
WE WOUND OURSELVES INTO THE GUARDS THAT WERE TO GREET THEM, PUT THEM TO SLEEP WITH THE SAME "WINE", THEN DISGUISED OURSELVES AS THEM AND AWAITED THE CREW FROM SADO.
BUT WE HAD POISONED THAT WINE.
ON A BONE COLD WINTER MORNING, WE BROUGHT "HOT WINE" TO THE CREW THAT HAD DISEMBARKED.


...T-The one trying to kill us and hoard all the money is Fukurokuju the Monkey trainer!
If not, Jurojin, the one who knows our addresses!!
...AND I, "HOTEI", BECAME A FORTUNE TELLER. WE LIVED THESE LIVES FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, AND IT BECAME A JOKE AFFORDED BY THE RICHES WE WOULD HAVE IN FIVE YEARS.
"SHOJO" OR "FUKU-ROKUJU" BECAME A MONKEY TRAINER.
"DAIKOKU" BECAME A RICE DEALER.
WE WERE ALL PENNILESS AND UNEMPLOYED.
"EBISU" BECAME A FISHER.
EXCLUDING THE FOOT SOLDIER IN CHARGE OF GUARDING THE TRIBUTE FROM THE MAGISTRATE OF SADO, "BISHAMON"...
AND THE MISTRESS OF A RESTAURANT WHOM WE EMPLOYED SO WE COULD USE HER RESTAURANT AS A SAFE PLACE TO CONSPIRE, "BENZAI"...
FOR CAUTION'S SAKE, WE KEPT OUR ADDRESSES SECRET FROM EACH OTHER, BUT FOR OUR DAY OF ASSEMBLY FIVE YEARS LATER, WE ALL TOLD ONE OF THEM OUR ADDRESS. IT WAS...
THE LEADER WHO PLANNED THIS RAID... "JUROJIN".


...But that won't happen! You will tell us where Jurojin lives!
I see.
So the gods of longevity are the ones to survive.
Because they say that Jurojin and Fuku-rokuju are two names for the same god.
...Or perhaps they're both conspiring together...



JUROJIN (SAME GOD AS FUKUROKUJU?) BORE A STAFF WITH A SCROLL AT ITS HEAD, UPON WHICH WAS WRITTEN THE LIFESPAN OF ALL HUMANS.

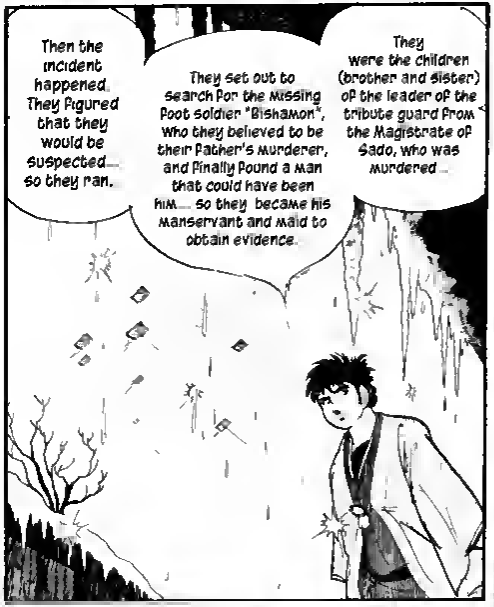


.....

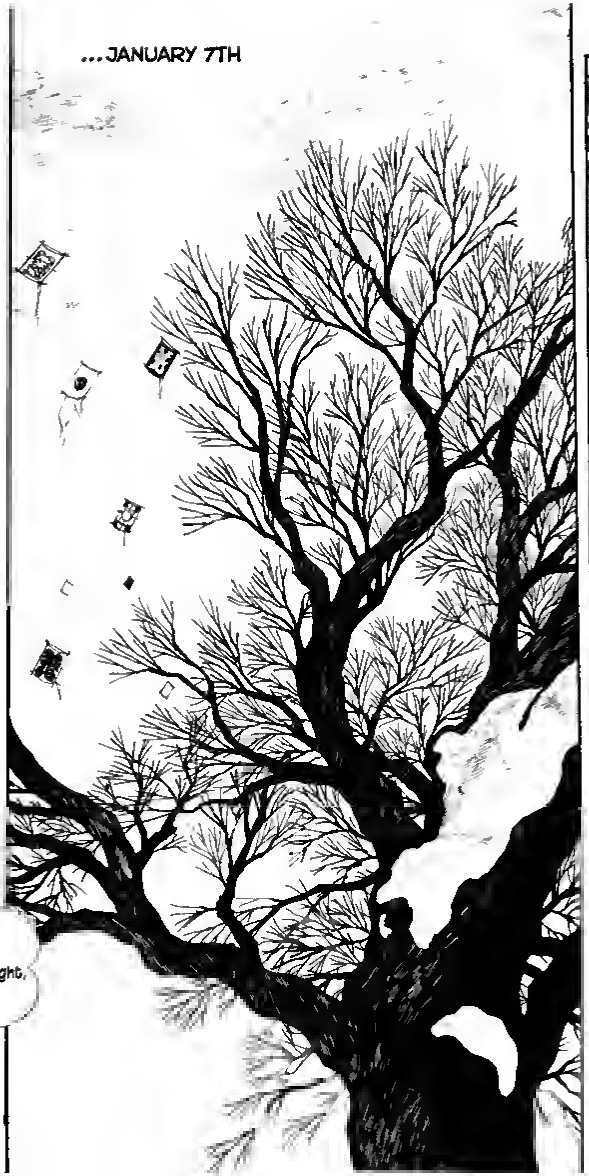
You suppose they're sleeping, or still waiting on the monkey...!?
It's awfully quiet here

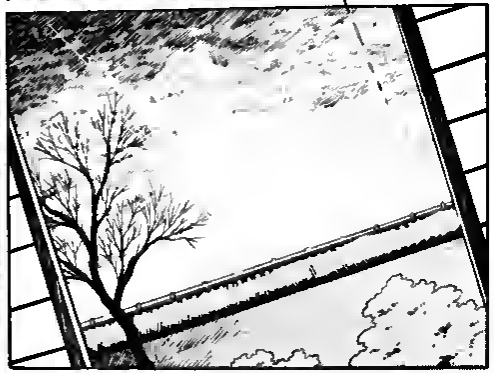
HMM!?
I smell something strange.
Must be for monkey training.
Is it fragrant wood?
No!
That's him!
Don't panic... He's dead!
And he's been dead for four or five days!

T-That could only mean... that the god of longevity was the first to have been killed.
Which means the perpetrator...
is Fukurokuju!!


Then the incident happened. They figured that they would be suspected... so they ran.
They set out to search for the missing foot soldier "Bishamon", who they believed to be their father's murderer, and finally found a man that could have been him... so they became his manservant and maid to obtain evidence.
They were the children (brother and sister) of the leader of the tribute guard from the Magistrate of Sado, who was murdered...

...JANUARY 7TH

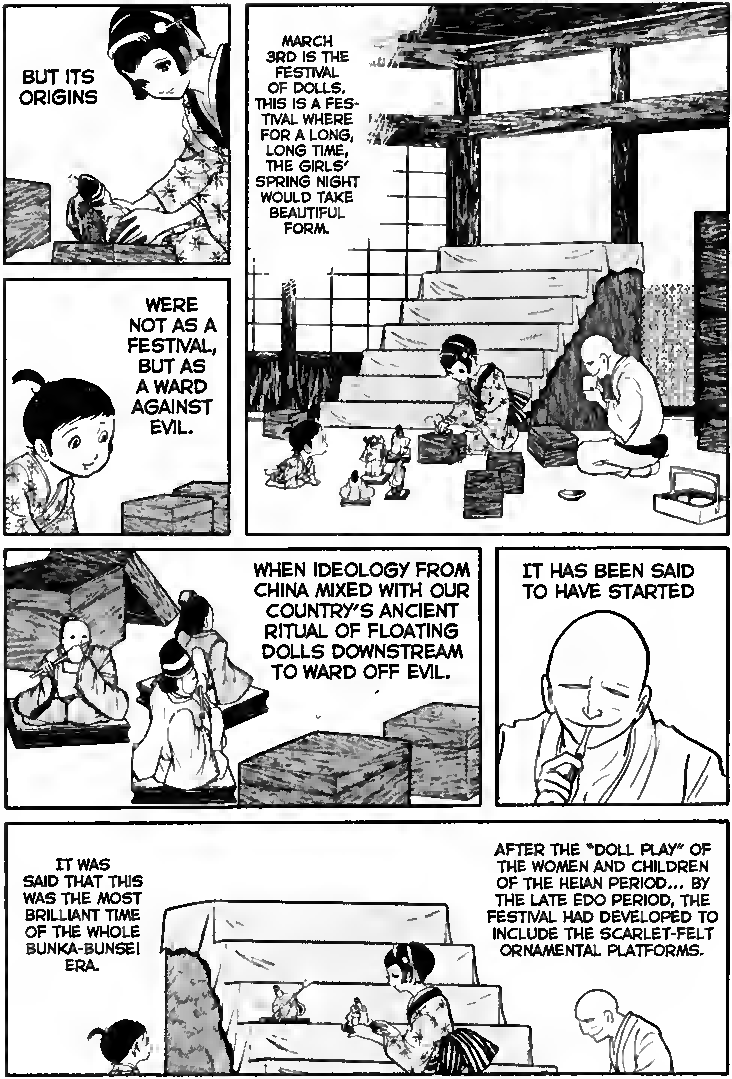




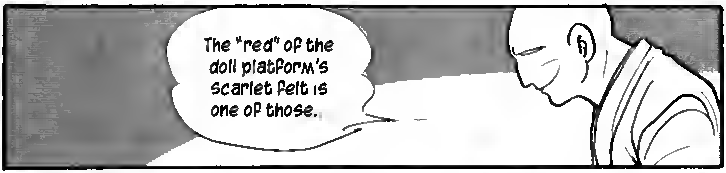
January 1971: "Seven Gods of Fortune" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控
SABU & ICHI
CHAPTER 57
PRESENTED BY
HOKUTO NO GUN
AND HAPPY SCANS
TRANSLATED BY
SYSTEMATICCHAOS
CLEANED BY
WRIGHT
TYPESETTING BY
KAZUHIKO
PROOFREADING BY
ANGELOFCHAOTIX
CREDITS PAGE BY
FROBMAN
WRITTEN BY
ISHINOMORI
SHOTARO

Chapter 58: The Severed Doll Head


BUT ITS ORIGINS
MARCH 3RD IS THE FESTIVAL OF DOLLS. THIS IS A FESTIVAL WHERE FOR A LONG, LONG TIME, THE GIRLS' SPRING NIGHT WOULD TAKE BEAUTIFUL FORM.
WERE NOT AS A FESTIVAL, BUT AS A WARD AGAINST EVIL.
WHEN IDEOLOGY FROM CHINA MIXED WITH OUR COUNTRY'S ANCIENT RITUAL OF FLOATING DOLLS DOWNSTREAM TO WARD OFF EVIL.
IT HAS BEEN SAID TO HAVE STARTED
IT WAS SAID THAT THIS WAS THE MOST BRILLIANT TIME OF THE WHOLE BUNKA-BUNSEI ERA.
AFTER THE "DOLL PLAY" OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE HEIAN PERIOD... BY THE LATE EDO PERIOD, THE FESTIVAL HAD DEVELOPED TO INCLUDE THE SCARLET-FELT ORNAMENTAL PLATFORMS.

From my memory
Day by day, everything that has color loses it and fades to black and ash...
But the colors that remain become more extraordinary than the real thing.


The "red" of the doll platform's scarlet felt is one of those.

...The Festival of Dolls was quite popular in the Kamigata region when I was a child.
I didn't have any sisters myself...

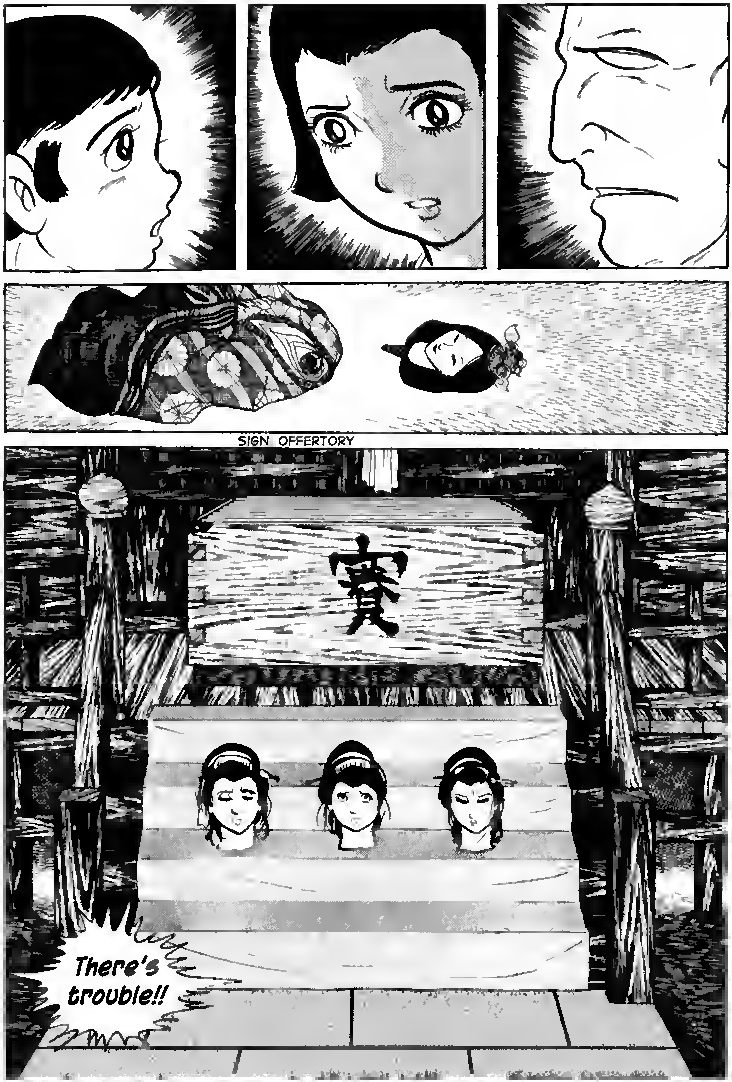
These dolls were given to me when I was little
But what can I do about that?
Tee hee ...

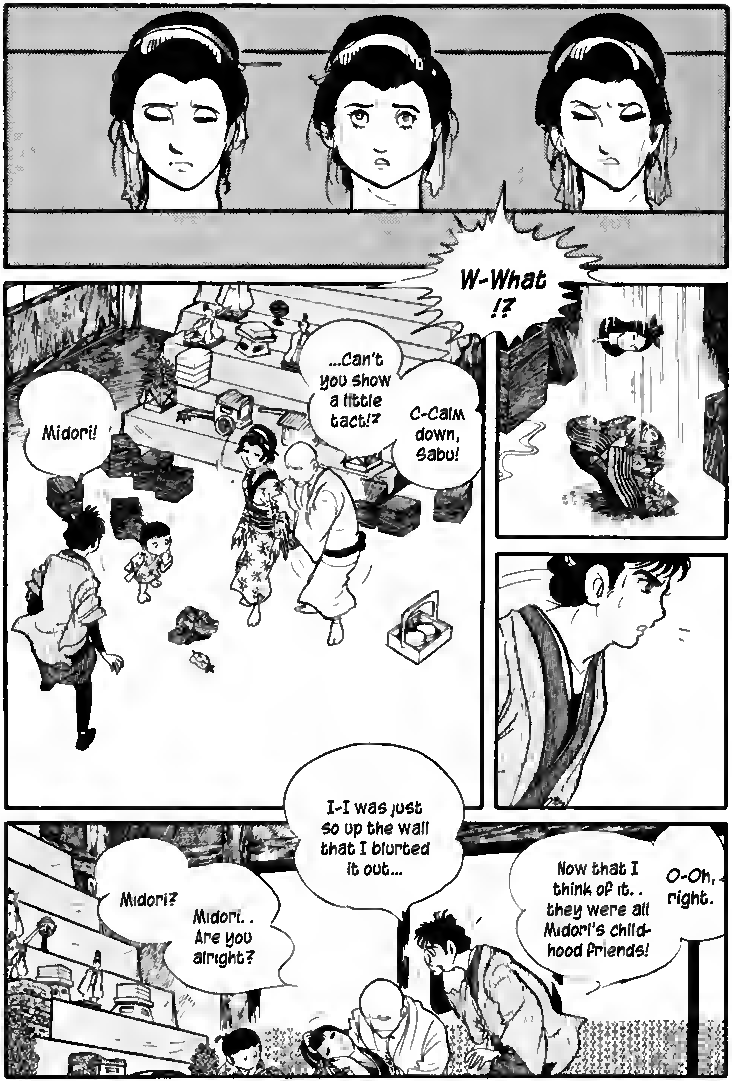
Let me keep one!
So... You won't need them anymore?

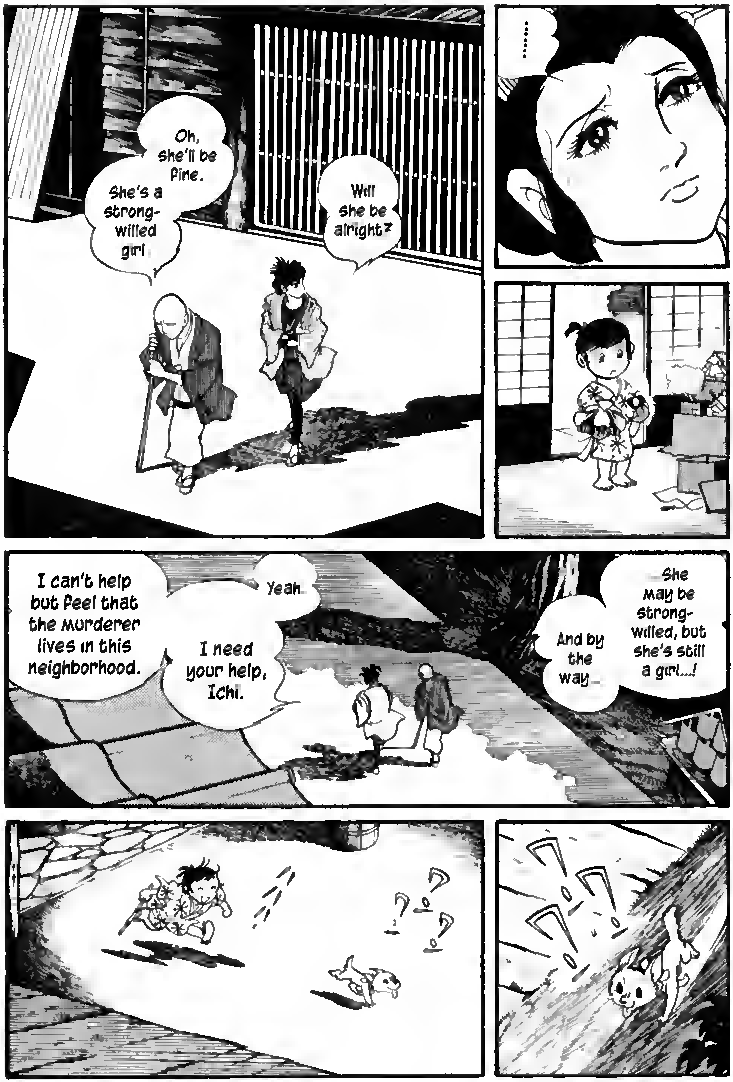
But the girls of my neighborhood would call me over, and I'd always be jealous of them.
Thase dolls are shoddy!

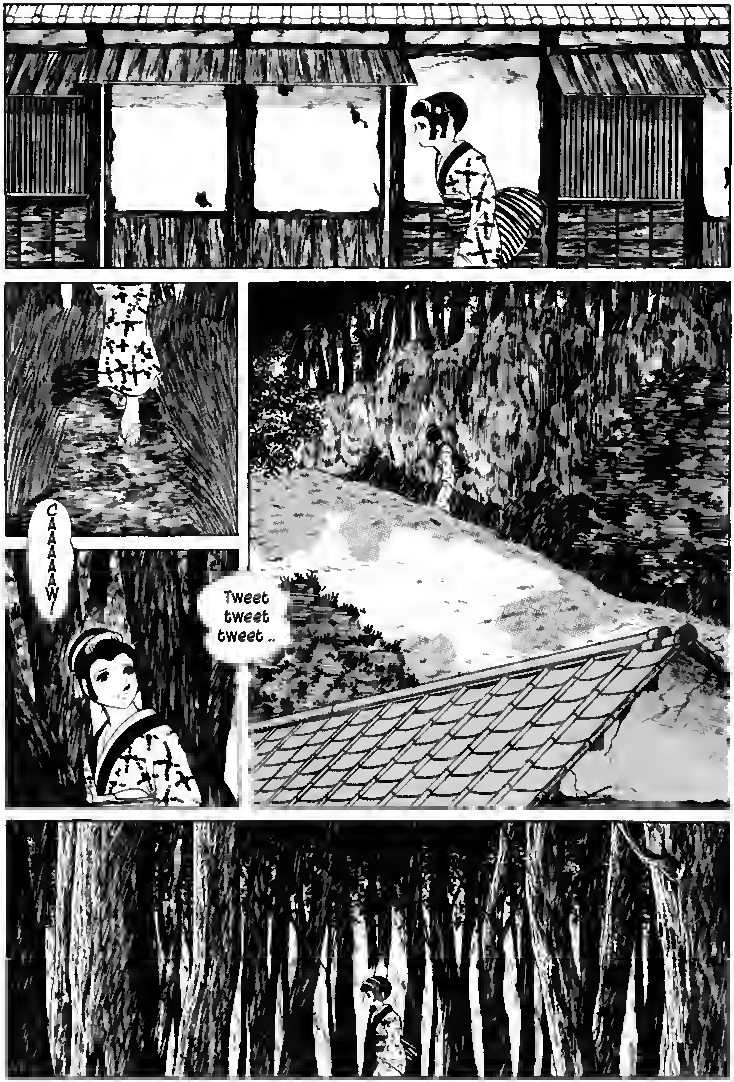
……
No!
…If even one's missing, the platform…
Because…
…Oh, no, it's nothing
Huh?
Midori. . Is something wrong?
…What could it have been?
…like I was on the verge of remembering something dreadful…
I just felt
. It's just…
Was it about the neighborhood girls who you used to play with on the Festival of Dolls?
Ah-ha! I got it!
…Something from my childhood.

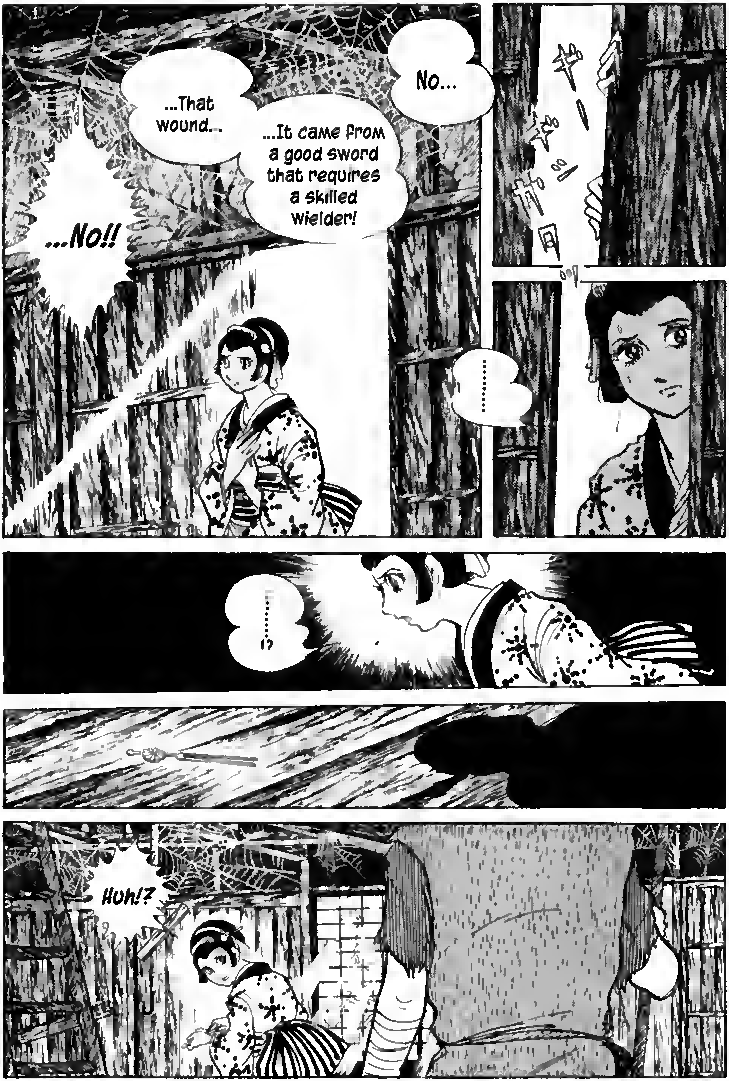
...Has Sabu found any leads?
Your three girlfriends from the neighborhood..
that went missing two or three days ago..
..Y-Yeah
You might be right...
Ahh!!
The Empress' head.. came off!
...Oh, no..
No!
Let me keep it!
You won't need it now, will you?

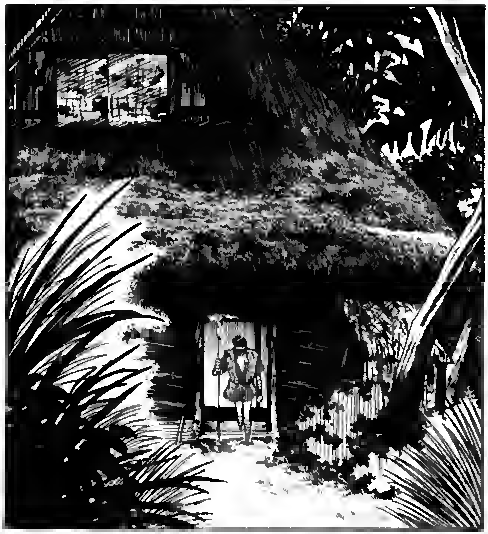

SIGN OFFERTORY
賽
There's trouble!!

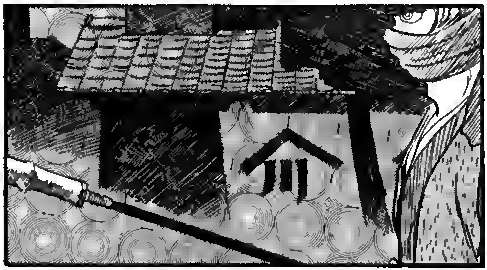

W-What !?
Midori!
...Can't you show a little tact!?
C-Calm down, Sabu!
I-I was just so up the wall that I blurted it out...
Midori?
Midori.. Are you alright?
Now that I think of it.. they were all Midori's childhood friends!
O-Oh, right.


Oh, she'll be fine.
She's a strong-willed girl.
Will she be alright?
.....
I can't help but feel that the murderer lives in this neighborhood.
Yeah.
I need your help, Ichi.
And by the way—
—She may be strong-willed, but she's still a girl...!


CAAAAAW
Tweet tweet tweet ..

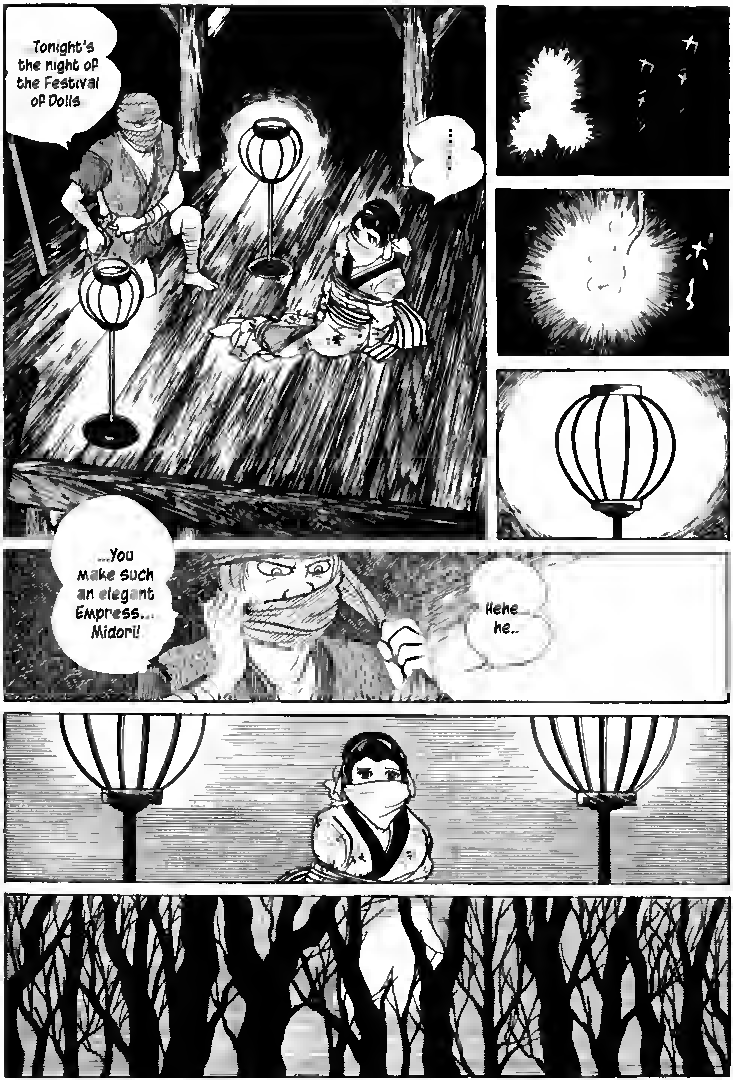

...That wound...
...It came from a good sword that requires a skilled wielder!
...No!!
No...
Huh!?





SIGN. DOLL SHOP
雛尼
御雛人形
御雛人形
御雛人形
Urgh

Heh
he...

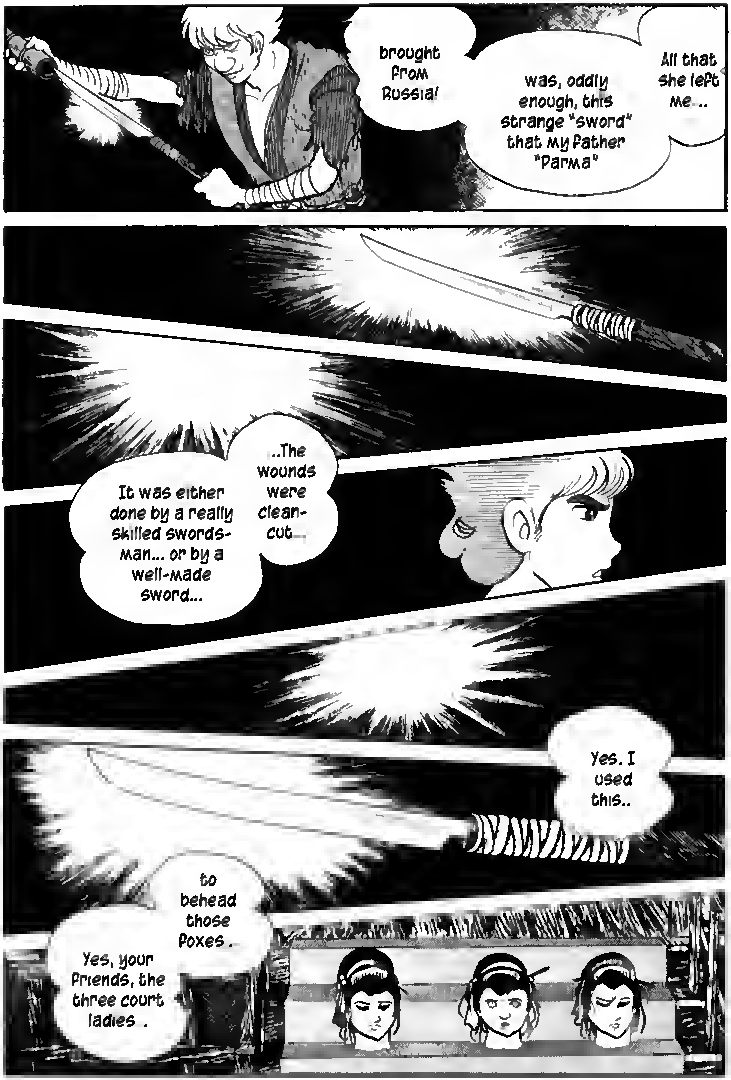

Tonight's the night of the Festival of Dolls
...
...You make such an elegant Empress... Midori!
Hehe... he..

Is that you, Midori?
Huh?
Where... did Midori go?
Where did you... find that doll's head?
Santa,

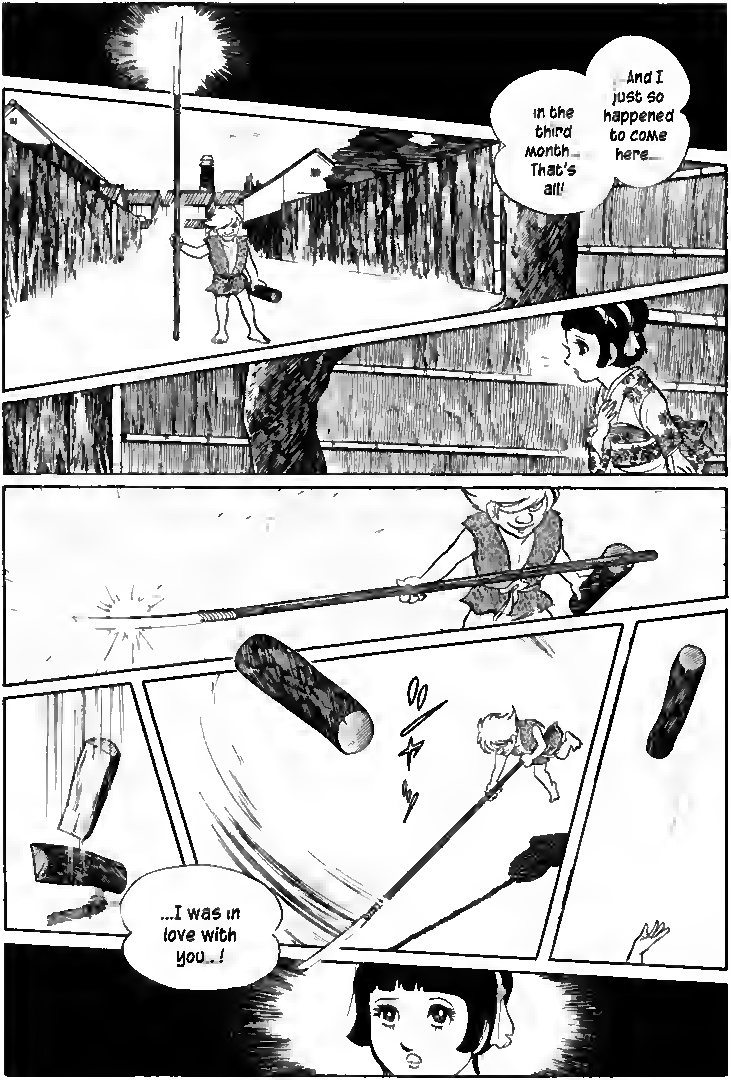
I-I've fallen in love with you!!
Heh

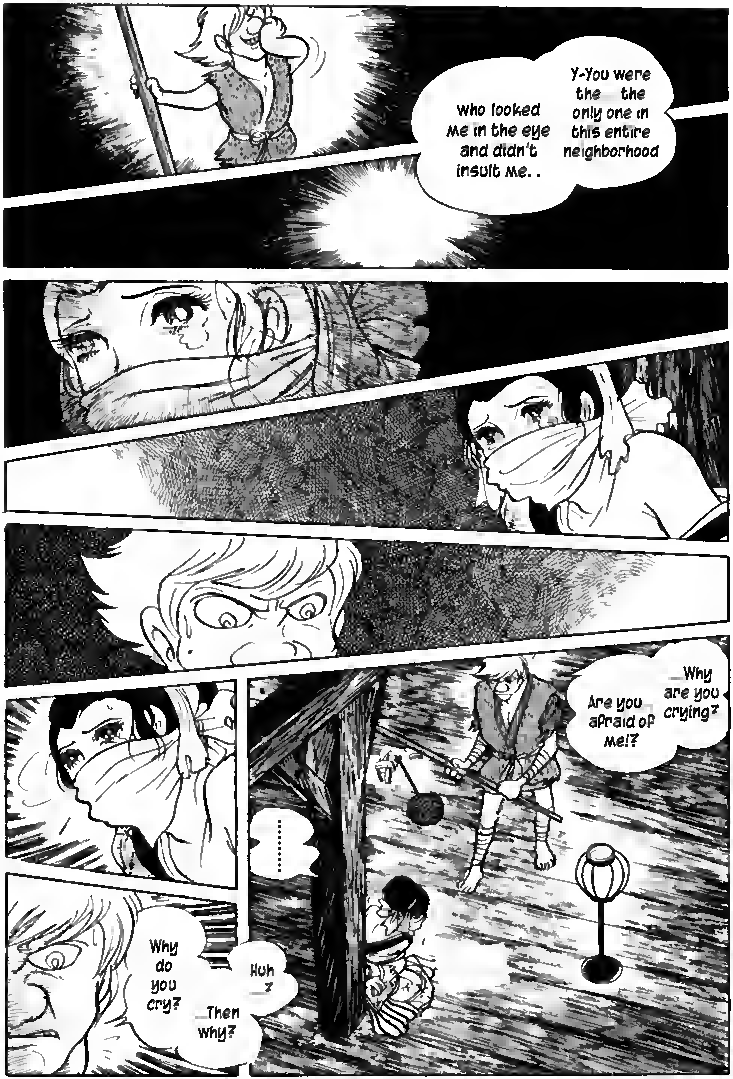
No!!
..And especially so for a boy born with a big nose, grey eyes, and red hair like me...
The Festival of Dolls is already a day when any boy feels unwanted!
Get lost!!
What's with your potato-nose and chili-pepper hair... You're a weird kid...!!
You're creepier than just creepy!
...How did you even manage to get in here?
No!!

...Heh...
No one would even talk to me!
...No one would play with me.
This is all my Father's Fault!
Yes.
And it wasn't even my Fault that I was born like this!
And before long... he turned over and died!
He made my mother conceive..
His boat sank in a storm .. and he drifted here...
...My Father was a fishmonger from a country up in the North called "Russia"...
And at the very end of it all, she died on the side of a road like some dog last autumn!
After all, it was like she was carrying around a signboard saying "I slept with a foreigner". .!
Ever since I was born, she could not settle down in the same place for any more than two years... Heh...
But it was my mother that was most pitiable...
Heh...

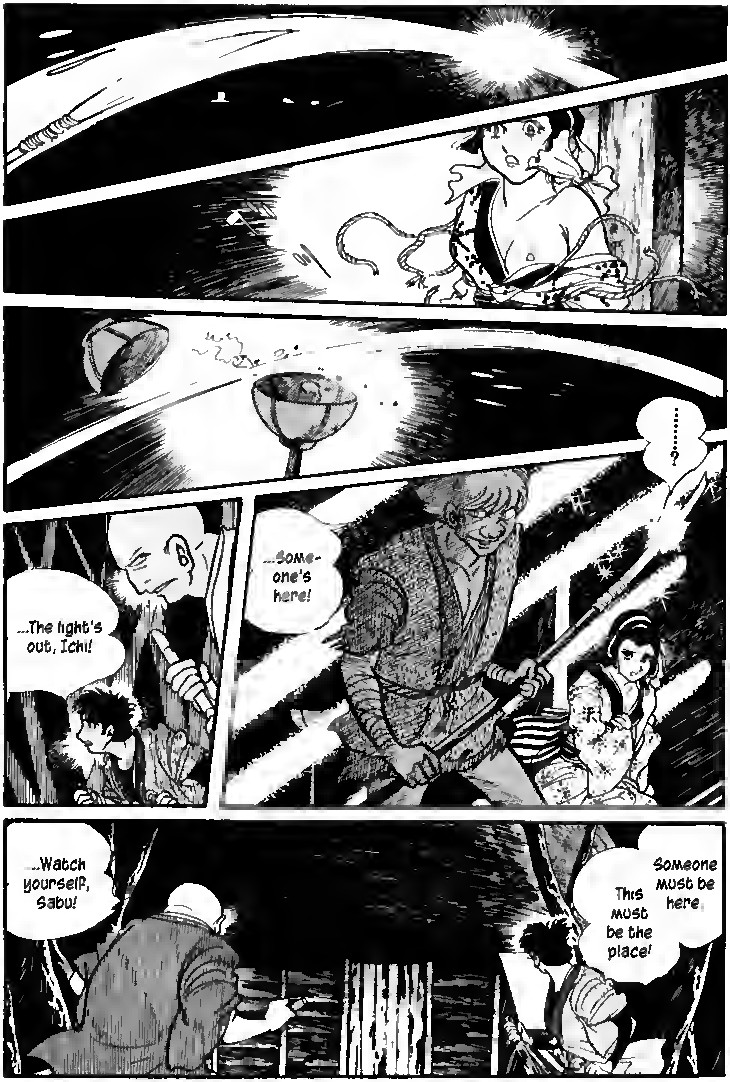

All that she left me...
was, oddly enough, this strange "sword" that My Father "Parma"
brought from Russia!
..The wounds were clean-cut...
It was either done by a really skilled swords-man... or by a well-made sword...
Yes. I used this..
to behead those foxes.
Yes, your friends, the three court ladies.

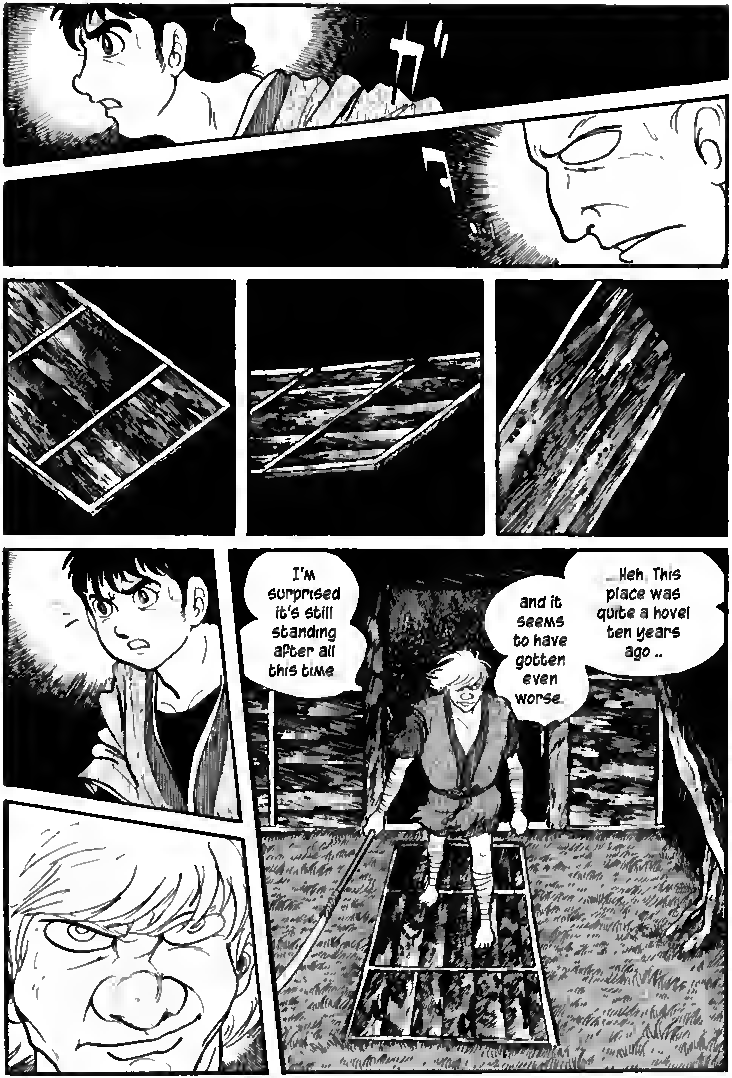
..Yes, I beheaded them!!
..With the sorrowful passing of my mother,
I no longer had anyone in this world who would even shed a tear for me..
I've... been going around, taking my vengeance..
on those who tormented my mother and I.

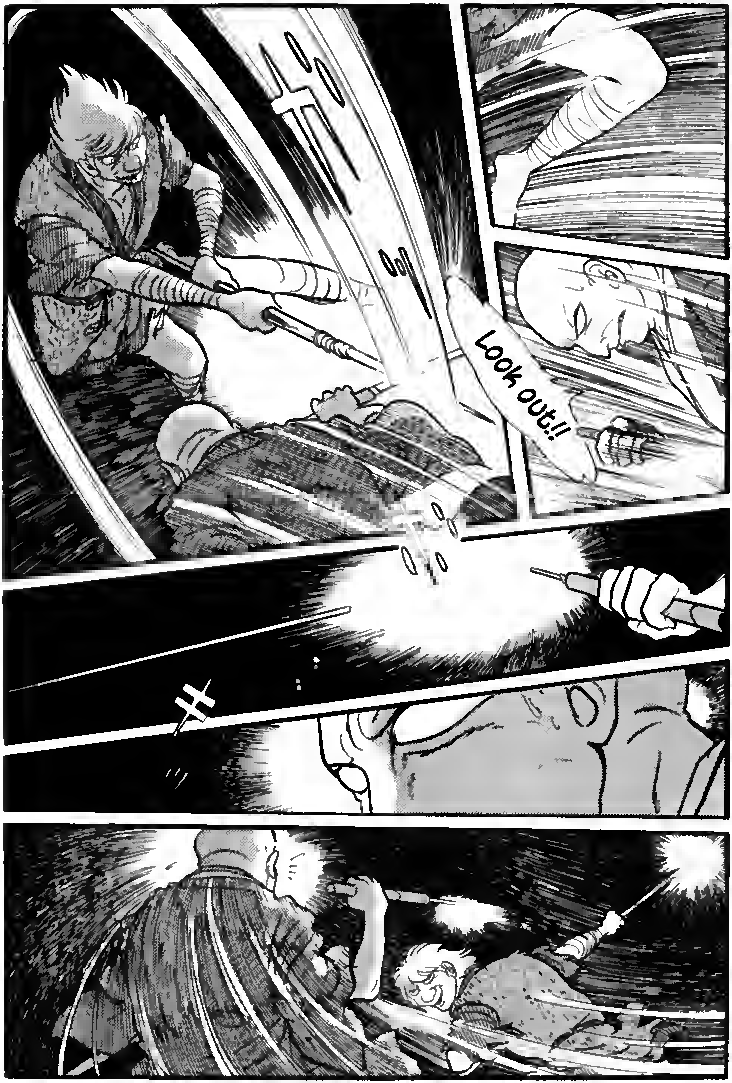

...And I just so happened to come here...
In the third month... That's all!
...I was in love with you...!

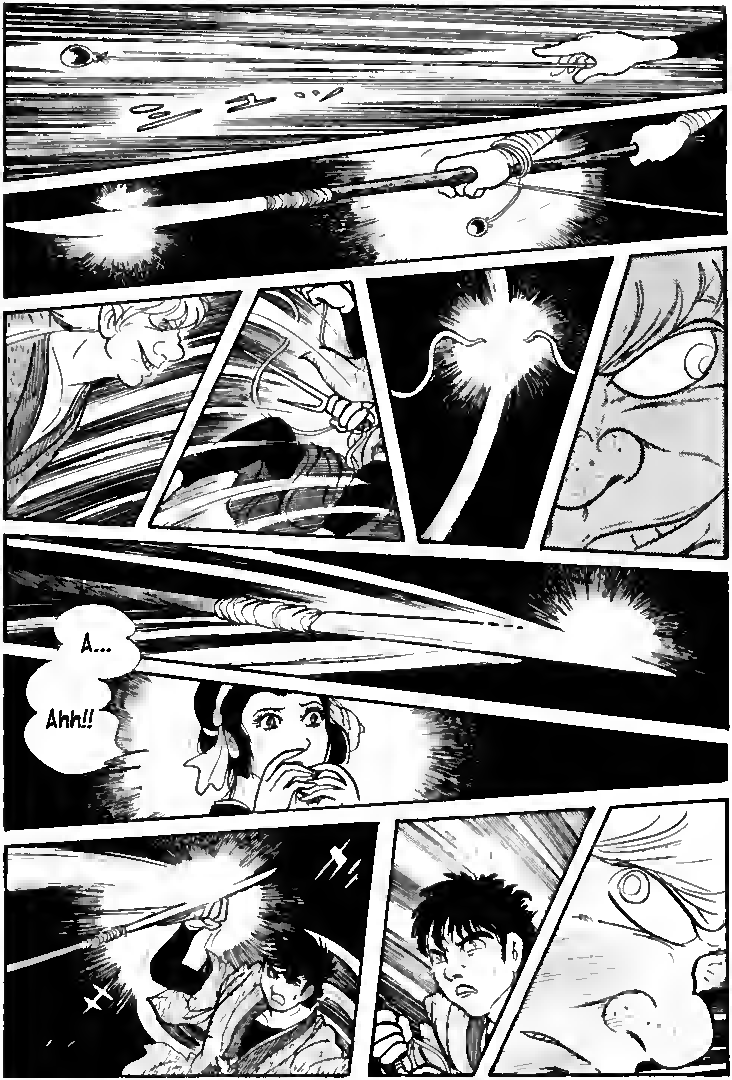

Y-You were the... the only one in this entire neighborhood who looked me in the eye and didn't insult me..
...Why are you crying?
Are you afraid of me!?
.....
Huh?
Why do you cry?
...Then why?

I...
don't need anyone looking at me like that... I don't want anyone's goddamn pity...
D-Don't look at me...
like that!!
Urrgh.
Cut it out!!
Hmm!?


...The fight's out, Ichi!
...Someone's here!
.....?
...Watch yourself, Sabu!
This must be the place!
Someone must be here.


I'm surprised it's still standing after all this time
and it seems to have gotten even worse
...Heh. This place was quite a hovel ten years ago ..


Look out!!


ヒュン
A....
Ahh!!

...S...
So he's.. the "Severed Doll Head" killer!!
.....

March 1971: "The Severed Doll Head" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控
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Chapter 59: The Cornered Rat Bites the Cat...

● PART ONE: THE CASE
Judging by the dryness of this blood...
he had to have been murdered about two or three days ago.
..He was pierced through the heart with something like a dagger.

And judging by the disarray of the paperbox...
The murderer came in or left through here
He was such a pennypincher that he loathed marriage, saying that a wife would be too costly...
The victim did not have much of a good reputation in this neighborhood
Yes.
The thief must have been after money!
And the rumors say he stored up money and practiced moneylending...
Which means...
they were either after the deeds or the money...
and looking at these deeds, it seems the rumors were true.
Ahh, Master!
Let me through here!
Whoa, whoa!

……
Please, do pardon me for being late.
'Scuse me for a sec.
..It rained last night
Whether he came in or left through here
..the fact that there are no muddy footprints on the mat means it must have happened two or three days ago..
Hmm, hmm
..No, don't, Kuromon!
You'll ruin the foot-prints if you stomp about carelessly!

Huh...? W-What was that!?
..Hey, Ryuizumi!
You really think I didn't know that?
I came down here to look for footprints!
You won't find them if you don't explore a little!!
Huh? I ain't no crow, y'know..!
You saying I should float in the air while I look for them?
Or what?
You're drunk, aren't you!?
..Boss Kichibe ...
Listen, whipper-snapper!!
You've been gettin' a bit too self-important as of late!!
been drinkin' this early in the day!?
Y..You sayin' that I...
W-What was that?

Hmm!?
that you get the girl and the masseur's help more often than not...
Heh... Well, the rumors say..
Heh.. he...
Besides.. You don't even catch them alone..!!
Heh... Don't go thinking you're the gods' gift cause you stop a crook now and then!!
W-What? Say that again...!!
...Now, now,
is this any time to be bickering!?
Come on, everyone..
We'll search the area all together!

Y... Yes.
.....
Huh ?
.....

ﾁｭｰ
Ahh!

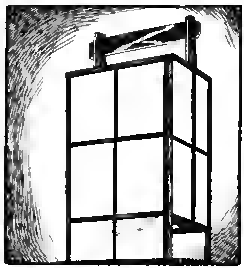
ガスッ
At work.
Where's your Mommy and daddy?
Yeah
...Hey, kid, do you live here?
...I see.
Al-right, then!
I know I didn't know better, but I ended up giving Mommy and Deddy a bunch of trouble
I got in an acci-dent.
don't have good legs
Yeah
I...
Do you spend the entire day here... every day?

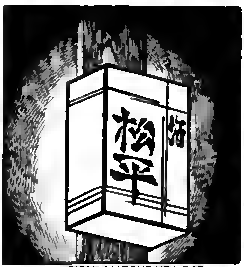
I did!
You're here all day, looking outside...
So did you notice anybody leaving that house?
Huh!?
He was a guy with one of his... this ear cut half-off
He was pretty handsome,
so a woman must've bit it off
Did you... see anything?
...Oh, Sabu...
N-No... Nothing

Hmph!
.....
I see.
Neither did we.
...Just you wait, damnit!!

PART TWO: THE ARREST
...He's still not home.
I wonder what's bothering Sabu?
My..
He hasn't shown up at my house in the past day or two
I see
Well, I just thought I'd try

Hmm?
and stays out until night...
He goes out in the morning while it's still dark...
and then falls right asleep
He comes home late at night, eats without a word...
He's barely said anything to me.



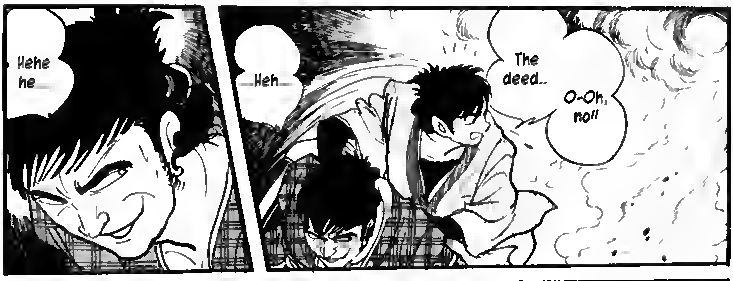


SIGN: MATSUDAIRA BAR

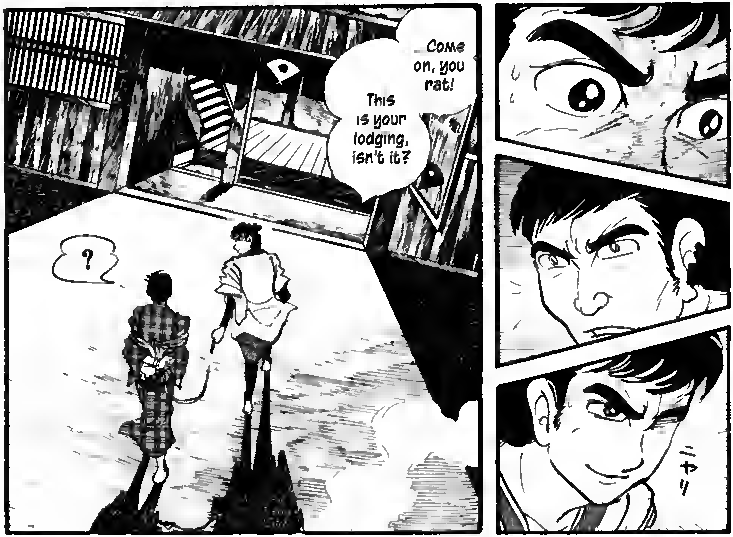
Yeah!
Well, see ya later!
……
…I'm still pretty damn cold!
……
!!
Huh!?
The hell are you!?
…Wait, I'll cool you off even more!

W-What the Fuck do you think you're doing!?
Why don't you ask your own heart!?
What!?
.....
Don't try and play dumb with me! Someone saw you come out of his house!!
You killed him, didn't you, Kyo!!?
I'm talking about the old... single rich man!!
Urgh...
and I Pound you!
I searched high and low for you for two days...
Hmpf
So I waited until you were finally alone...
You're just the petty villain I thought you were!
And I followed you all day today... investigating your behavior!

Now you can't explain this away!
It's a deed for money lent by the old man!!
Hmpf. I knew it!!
Huh?
Waaugh!
Y-You bastard!

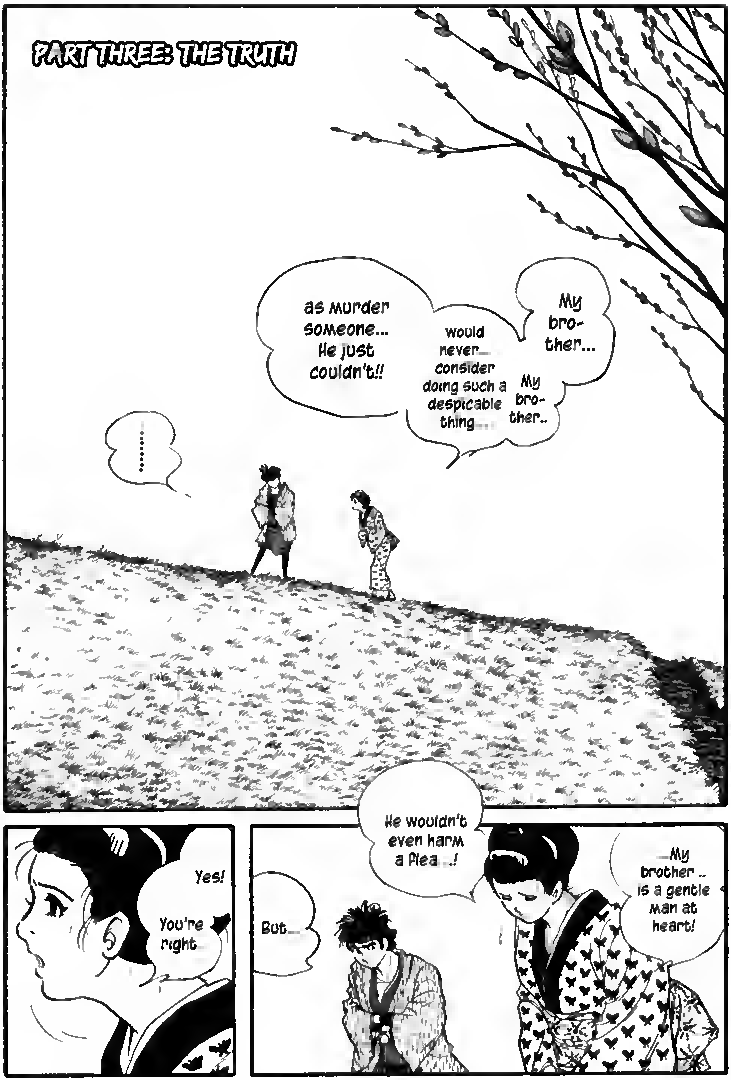

Hehe he...
Heh...
The deed...
O-Oh, no!!

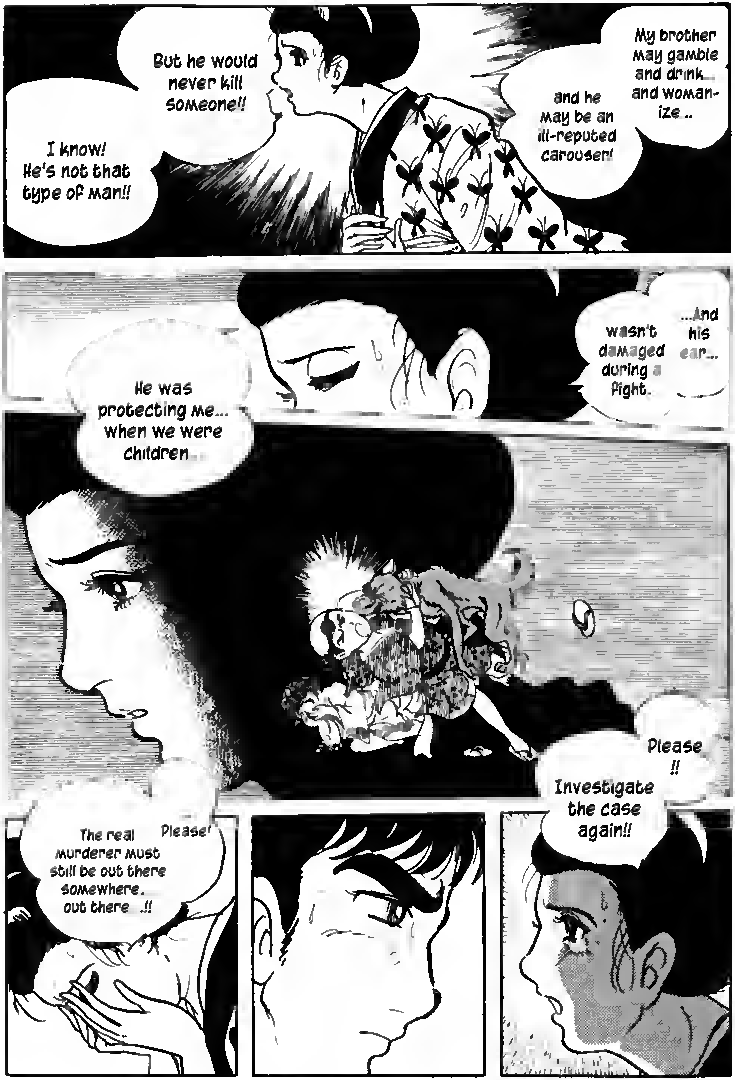
Y-You're screwing with me!
But that won't be happening! I still can find proof...
D-Dam-mit!!
Hehe...
Now... you don't have any proof that I'M a murderer!
Too bad, sir.


Come on, you rat!
This is your lodging, isn't it?
?
ニヤリ

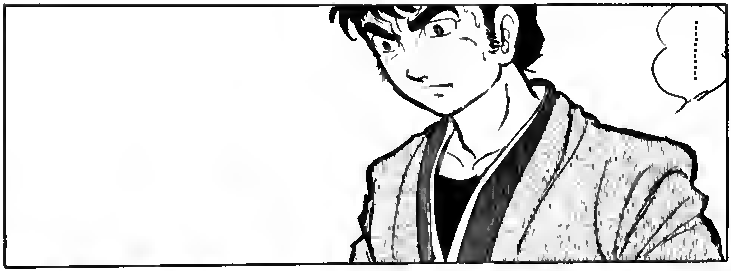
...I'll be searching everything in this man's room
.....
Hey! Don't tell me you've never seen this before!!
Eek!!

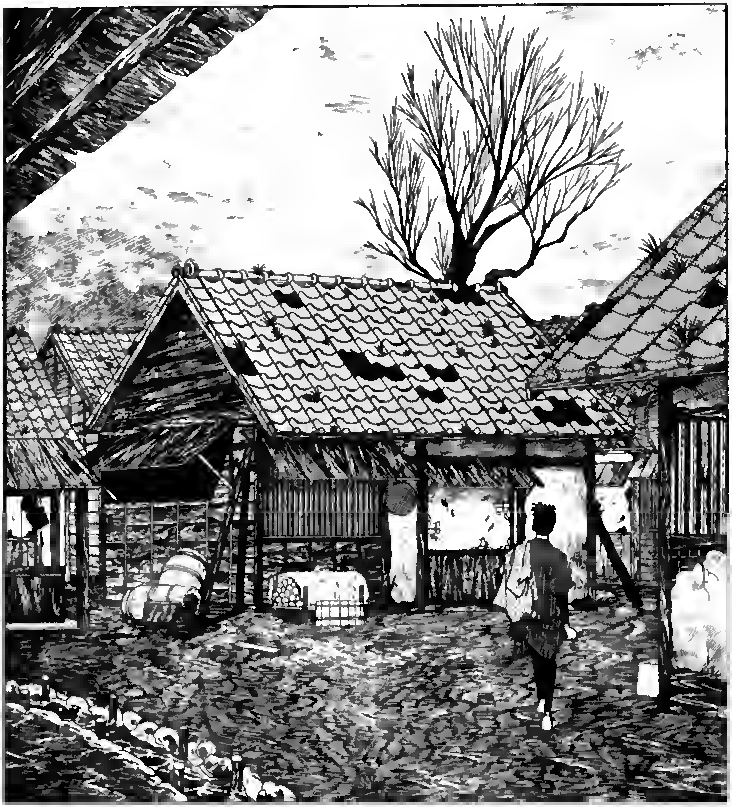
.....
What's this blood-stained dagger doing here!? Don't tell me you don't know!
Well!?
The old man was killed by a stab through the heart by a dagger!
ス・・・
...Is something on your mind?
...You just made a major accomplishment...
but you don't look too pleased, do you, Sabu?
Huh?
...Oh, no...


PART THREE: THE TRUTH
My bro-ther...
My bro-ther..
would never... consider doing such a despicable thing...!
as murder someone... He just couldn't!!
.....
—My brother... is a gentle man at heart!
He wouldn't even harm a flea...!
But...
Yes!
You're right.


I know! He's not that type of man!!
But he would never kill someone!!
and he may be an ill-reputed carouser!
My brother may gamble and drink... and womanize ..
...And his ear...
wasn't damaged during a fight.
He was protecting me... when we were children
Please !!
Investigate the case again!!
Please!
The real murderer must still be out there somewhere. out there .!!

...Alright, kid...
Think about this one more time... and tell me.
When the man with one ear came out of the house...
was it the day before the rainy day?
No.
It was the day after the rainy day
That's right.
Just the morning that you came!
W-
B-But you said that...
What!?
I never said anything!
You just asked
if anyone left that house! You never asked me when!



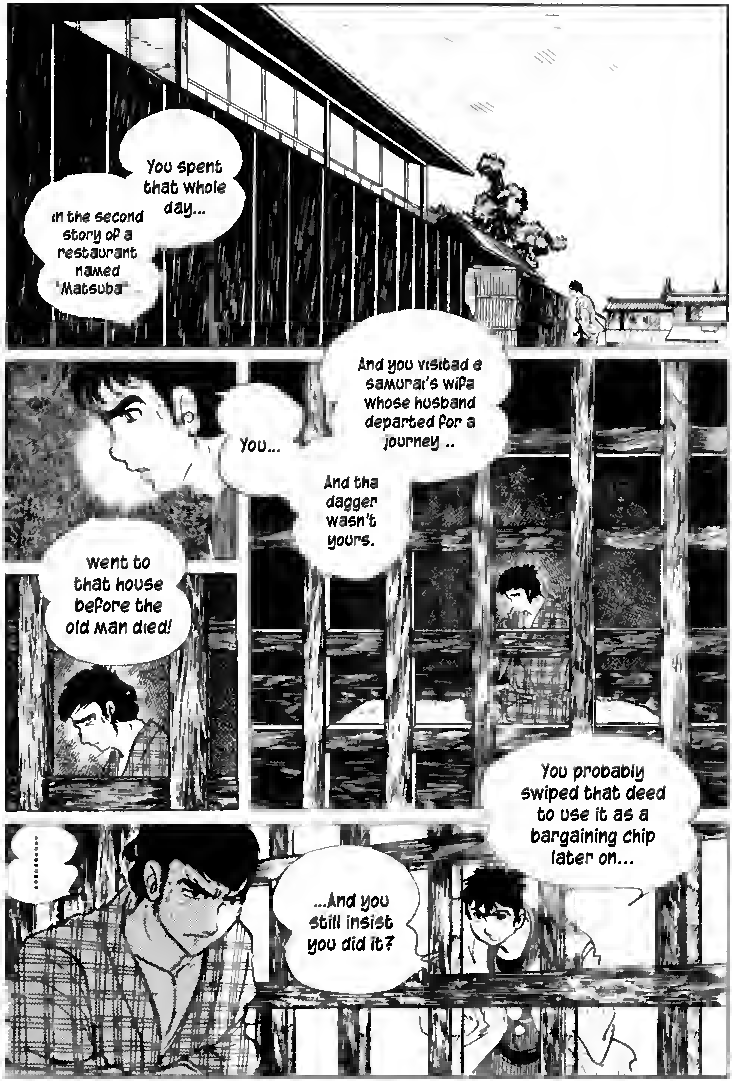


Excuse me..
Oh!?
N-Nothing yet..
...N-No.
...have you found.. any proof that my brother didn't do it...!?
I ..Is that so!

If your talk with my father.. worsens his impression of my brother..
My father despises my brother!
But.. I would rather you didn't speak to him.
Be-cause
Why...
Does your father hate your brother?
...That's my father.
Because.. It's all my brother's fault
...that he has to live this way.
My brother lost a lot of money in gambling...
and my father...
But it seems
that what's happened to my brother now truly pains his heart

.. My brother and I were born of seperate mothers!
My brother's mother and my Father parted on ill terms...
and My brother hates My Father because of that.
And... that's the reason
that My brother turned bad...
...My Father especially cares For me in place of My absent brother...
My brother and Father are both gentle people.
B...But please don't get me wrong.
What ...!?
.....
.....
You want to see the evidence... the dagger again, to investigate once more!?
No, don't bother, Sabu.
We've already charged that carouser Kyoji as the murderer

No, we've never seen it before
.....
it would reflect as a failure on your part!
And .. Even if, perchance... though I think it's impossible.. the charge was overturned
T- Thank you.
Now do you mind if I ask you one more thing?
Where was Kyoji .. the day before the rain-fall ..?
Besides, he always mentioned how he loathed blades ..
I don't think he ever had that.
He was out doing that... Hehehe...
I know!
Hehe he
Let's see... The day before the rainfall...


You spent that whole day...
in the second story of a restaurant named "Matsuba"
And you visited a samurai's wife whose husband departed for a journey ..
You...
And the dagger wasn't yours.
went to that house before the old man died!
You probably swiped that deed to use it as a bargaining chip later on...
.....
...And you still insist you did it?

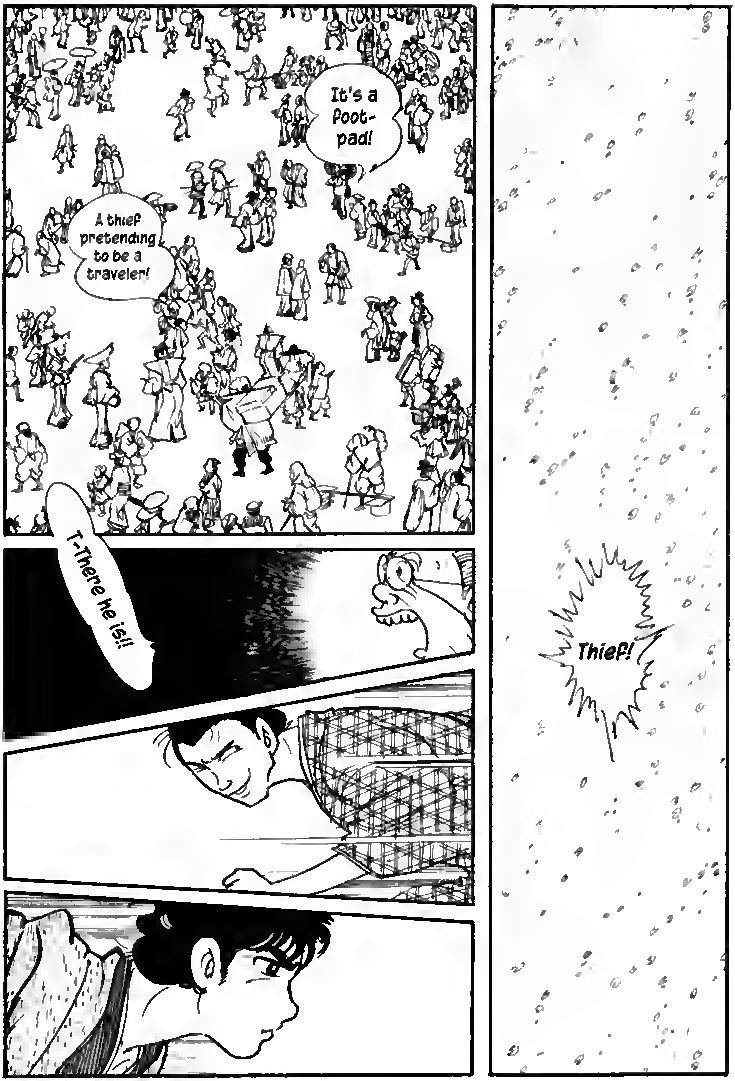
Who are you protecting!?
Why?
D...Don't tell Me Don't... tell... Me!?
.....
Oh, this is Father's
Where was it?

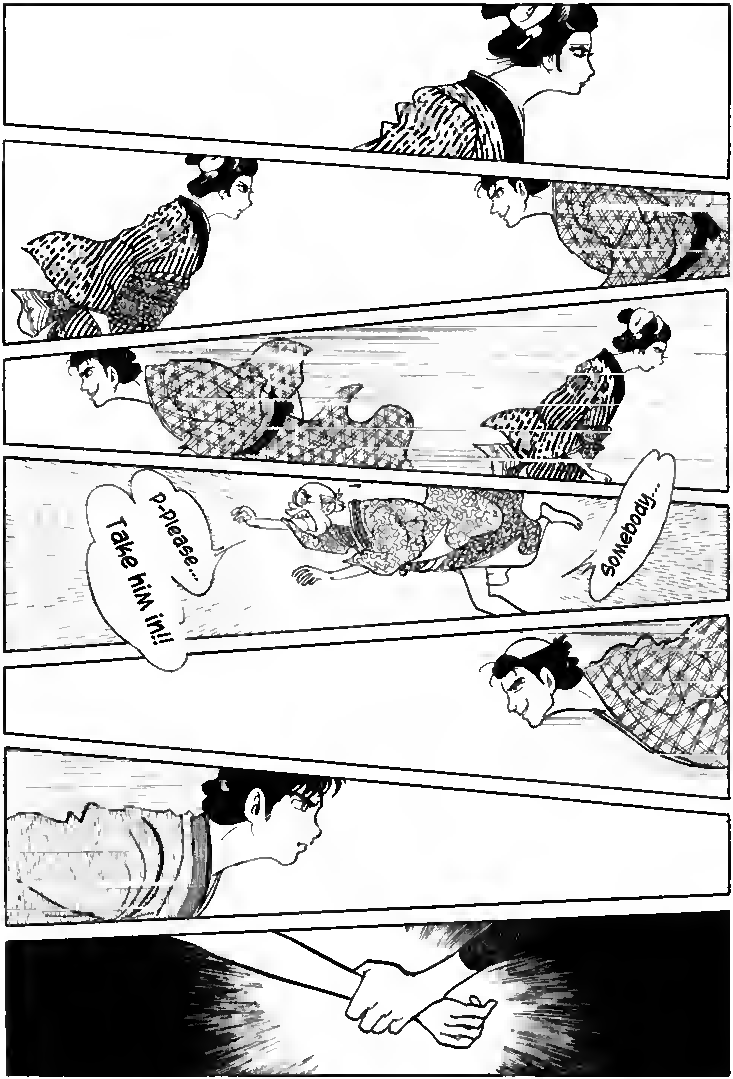
I...I had borrowed... m-money from that old man!!
I had no money to return it on the deadline, s..so I went to make a deal with him...
A-And that old bastard told me to send my daughter... my daughter... t-to Yoshiwara!!
T-That's... That's why I did it!!
...And two days later, Kyoji happened to be stealing money from the house..
And he discovered the dagger buried in the old man's throat ..!!
His father's dagger with a string tied around the broken hilt!!
.. And so Kyo... your brother... decided... to take his father's place!

March 1971: "The Cornered Rat Bites the Cat..." (FIN)

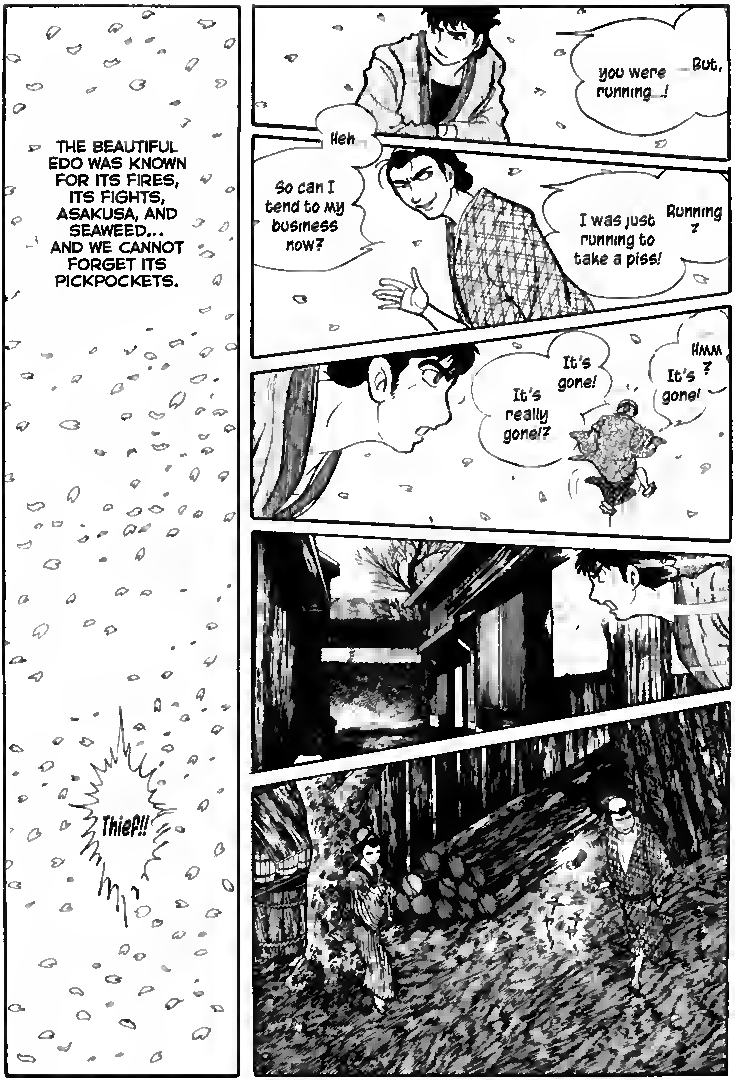
佐武と市捕物控
SABU & ICHI
CHAPTER 59
PRESENTED BY
HOKUTO NO GUN
AND HAPPY SCANS
TRANSLATED BY
SYSTEMATICCHAOS
CLEANED BY
WRIGHT
TYPESETTING BY
KAZUHIKO
PROOFREADING BY
ANGELOFCHAOTIX
CREDITS PAGE BY
FROBMAN
WRITTEN BY
ISHINOMORI
SHOTARO

Chapter 60: Pickpocket

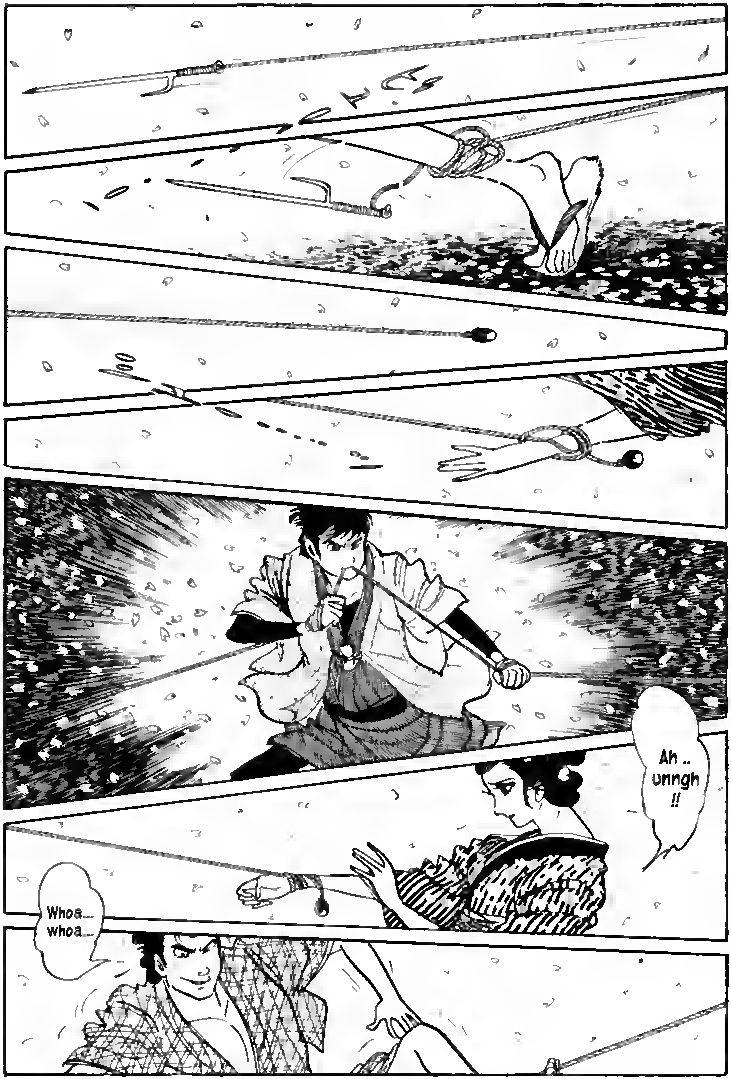

It's a pood-pad!
A thief pretending to be a traveler!
T-There he is!!
Thief!

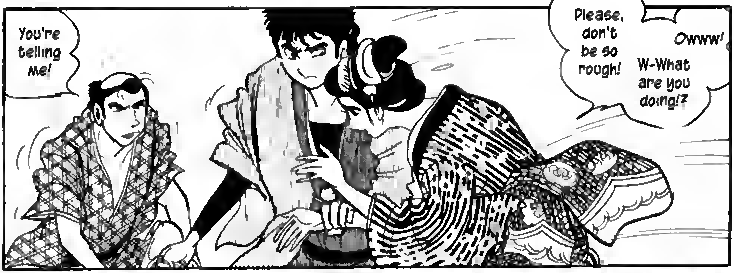

Somebody...
P-please...
Take him in!

Hold it right there!!
...Whoa!
What'd I do!?
What the hell?
Pick-pocket!
Thief!
Who, me?
That's what he claims.
You've gotta be joking! Why don't you search me!?
Here !!
H-He took my purse that I kept in my bosom...
Hmm?
...It's here!?
B-But I'm sure this youngster collided into me.
Hey, hey, hey, old man!
What did he take?
It may have been rude of me to bump into you,
But calling me a thief is a serious accusation.
S-S-Sorry... I-I was sure it was gone before...


THE BEAUTIFUL EDO WAS KNOWN FOR ITS FIRES, ITS FIGHTS, ASAKUSA, AND SEAWEED... AND WE CANNOT FORGET ITS PICKPOCKETS.
But, you were running...!
Heh
So can I tend to my business now?
Running ?
I was just running to take a piss!
It's gone!
It's really gone!?
Hmm
It's gone!
Thief!!

Whoa, whoa,
What, not you again!?
Don't tell me you were taking a piss again, you bastard!!
You just want to stare at me naked again, don't you?
Quit it
See?
Thief!
Pick-pocket!
It's that damn woman!
Damn!!
Kehe... Now you're after the bigger catch..
That scumbag and that broad...
are in league!!
...I-I got it!!
PICK POCKET!!


Ah..
unngh
!!
Whoa...
whoa...


You're telling me!
Please, don't be so rough!
Owww!
W-What are you doing!?

Ahh... You can search like that all you want..
.....
Now it's my turn, right?
I'll catch a head cold at this rate!
It may be spring, but it can get chilly in spring too.
But women have multiple hiding spots.
Unk!
N-No, you don't mean... Hold on!

H-Hey!
Yes, come on!
S-But that's

So then...
Why don't you search all her hiding spots?

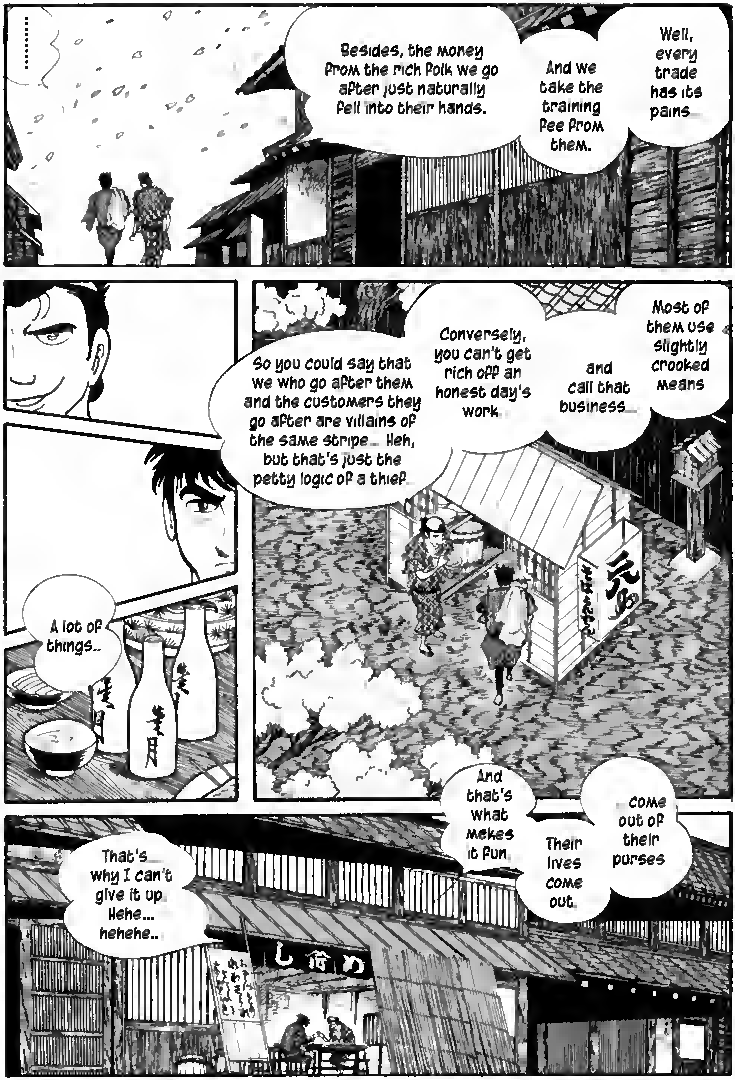
W-Wait!
What's stopping you...? Search every inch of my body
I get it! That's enough!
Y-You can go!!
I'll trust you!
Y-You two didn't do anything...!
...Tee-hee...
Hehe...
He's so corruptible!!
He stiffened up!
He blushed!
Tch
This is bad
He's just as talented as I made him out to be...
But still,
G...God-damm-it!!

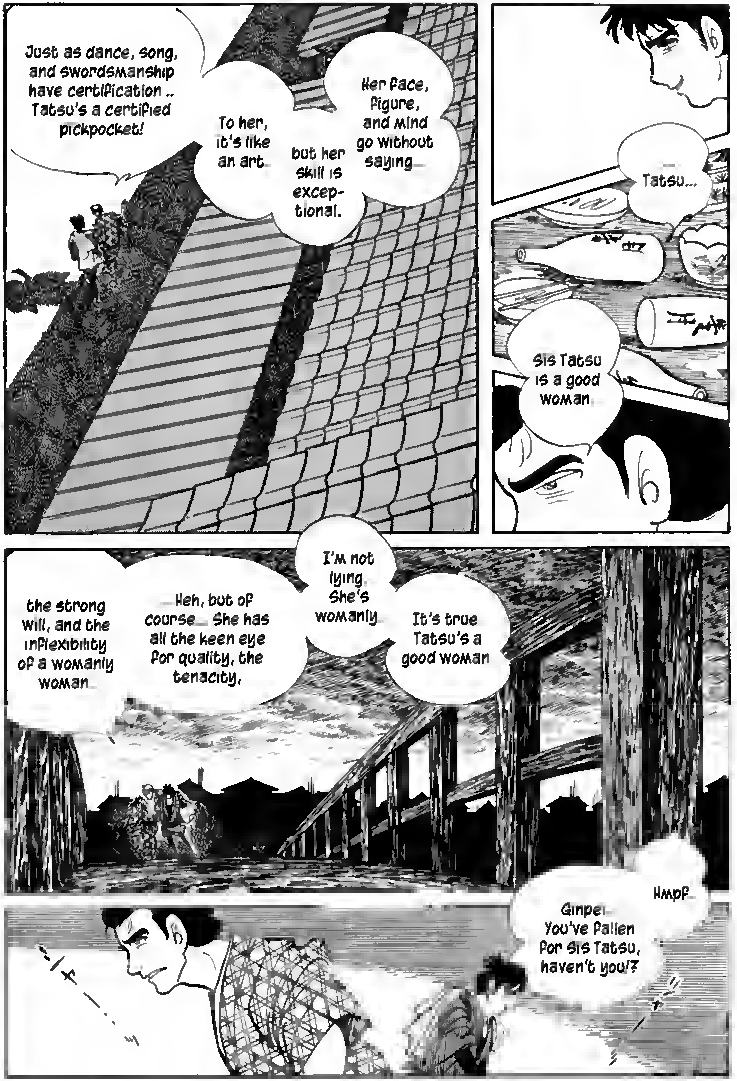
Boss!
Boss Sabu...
From Ryuizumi Temple!
...Gimpei the Flying Squirrel!
... The one in front... is the seaweed wholesale store keeper, Fujioka Nizaemon...
He's one of the wealthiest men in Asakusa
...Tatsu the Blue-boat
has been following Nizaemon for the past two or three days.
She must be after his heavy purse...
Heh .. Just you try!
...I won't let her get the best of me this time!!

.. What exactly do you want!?
Looks like we've both looked into eech other!
Heh!
Hehe hehe..
No, don't answer I know.
You're trying to stall me long enough for Tatsu to do her job!
but that won't happen this time!!
We'll talk with you when you catch us ..
Now, don't get too angry...
Hehe...
you have to catch us in the act first...
Whoa, whoe But,
that you're pick-pockets ...?
So you'll con-fess
HMM?
Thief!!
I-I knew this is what you were planning !!
Dam-mit!
This isn't over!!
?
The woman was the pickpocket, right!?
Where did she go!?

Huh!?
...Who are you?
What about me?
W-What do you mean?
I-I'm..
N-No, before that,
didn't you yell "Thief" ...!?
..I didn't have anything taken.
No, I... never said that.
Heh heh...
...And there's no one else here...
Huh? Huh?
B-But I'm sure..
Whatever the case, it wasn't me!

Urrrgh Son of a...
That's why I said you shouldn't get too hot headed and leap before looking
Hehehe See, Boss,
so your nerves are always on point
Rub your fingertips on this file,
Move the blood from your head to your fingertips And then...
That's why you have to let go of your eagerness ...
When the blood's rushed to your head, you end up failing. Same with our job.
But the daily training is hard
...It may look like a decent business where we just take things from peoples' bosoms... Heh...

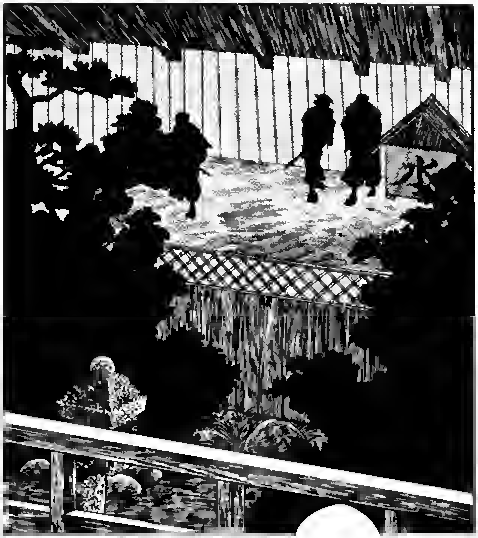

Besides, the money from the rich folk we go after just naturally fell into their hands.
And we take the training fee from them.
Well, every trade has its pains.
So you could say that we who go after them and the customers they go after are villains of the same stripe... Heh, but that's just the petty logic of a thief.
Conversely, you can't get rich off an honest day's work.
and call that business.
Most of them use slightly crooked means
A lot of things...
That's why I can't give it up. Hehe... hehehe...
And that's what makes it fun.
Their lives come out.
come out of their purses


Just as dance, song, and swordsmanship have certification .. Tatsu's a certified pickpocket!
To her, it's like an art...
but her skill is exceptional.
Her face, figure, and mind go without saying...
Tatsu...
Sis Tatsu is a good woman
the strong will, and the inflexibility of a womanly woman...
...Heh, but of course... She has all the keen eye for quality, the tenacity,
I'm not lying. She's womanly
It's true Tatsu's a good woman
Hmph
Ginpei. You've fallen for Sis Tatsu, haven't you!?

...I dunno!
Hmmm z
Tatsu's fallen for...
Don't you joke about that.
Urp!
Do.. D-Don't laugh...
Shut the hell up!
I thought I told you not to call me boss!!
Heh... I said you can never figure out a woman's heart, Boss.
Hmm?
Huh?
Wh-at iz
...Sis Tatsu... is waiting at Ashiya.
Yes, yes, got it. Got it!!
Bro Sabu,
...At Ashiya... alright?
.....
...Well, see you later.
No doubt. Now go on.
Yes Ashiya.
Tatsu's at Ashiya?

FUCKIN' IDIOT!!
...Kch.
That bigot!!
...I-I'm Sabu of Ryuizumi Temple...
Uh...
Yeah.
Is there
a woman named Tatsu waiting for me here...?

I-I see!
No, I haven't seen a woman like that.
Huh!?
I'm sorry I was so late...
B-Boss Sabu, it's me... Tatsu!
He tricked me again!!
G-God-dam-mit!
That bas-tard!
W-
Who's there!?
Oh, what are you doing?
Now, let's go back, and..
.....
Eh... hehe, just ..
it's not like you have anything worth something in your bosom!
...Oh, please,
.....
W-Well you got a point...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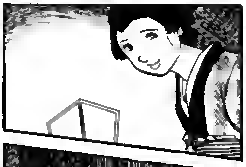
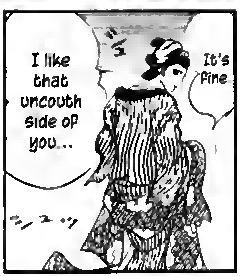


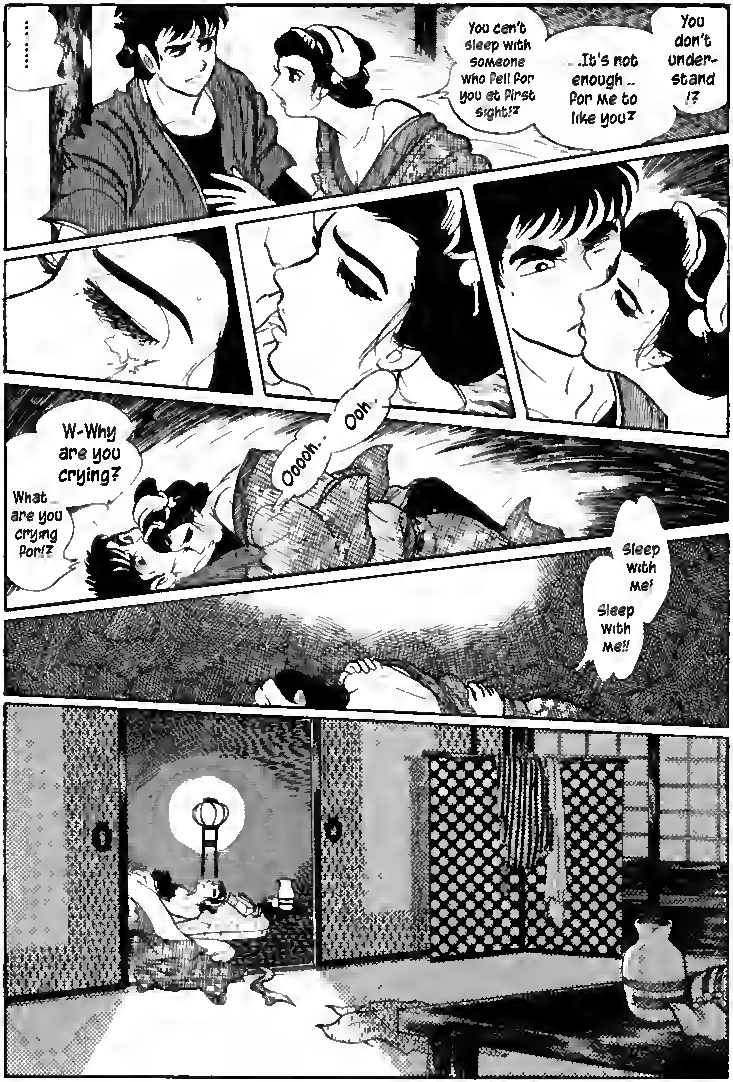
We would like a room.
And two or three bottles of wine...
Yes, yes, right this way.

.....
N' 4
...What business do you have with me...
that you brought me here for?


I like that uncouth side of you...
It's fine

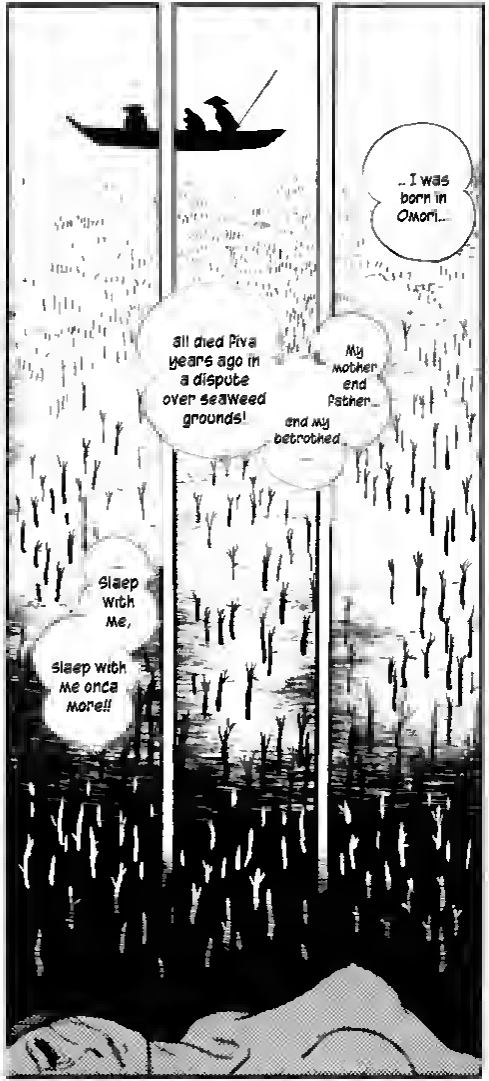
But I am a thief-taker
Still fronting with your thief-taker attitude?
Teehee you're pretty uncouth!

Come on! Why don't you take off that coat...!!
I'll drink, too!
Now drink up, Boss
Sleep with me, Boss!!
Please!!
W-What do you think you're doing!?
S-Stop!
T-That's not it! It's just...
...I-I don't understand... your heart!!
Can you not sleep with me... because I'm a pickpocket... and I'm defiled!?
Are you afraid!?
Or...
You coward!!


……
You don't understand!?
You can't sleep with someone who fell for you at first sight!?
…It's not enough… for me to like you?
Ooh…
Ooooh…
W-Why are you crying?
What are you crying for!?
Sleep with me!
Sleep with me!!

I'm a bald girl, aren't I?
Heh...
...I'm sorry...
I forced you into this.
.....
Boss, do you know what the Blueboat is?
It's a small boat that's sent out once every fourteen days..
to take the seaweed off the seaweed stalks that stick out of the ocean...
It turns blue because the seaweed sticks in the cracks of the planks on the bilge after a while..

W-What are you doing up so early...?
Sabu!?
Y... Yaah
I figured sha would be .. that's why I was too awkward to approach her..!
Midori was so worried about you...
N-No, more importantly, where were you last night...!?
You . don't... mean...!?
Huh?
.....
So... is that what really happened?


.. I was born in Omori...
My mother and father... and my betrothed
all died five years ago in a dispute over seaweed grounds!
Sleep with me,
Sleep with me once more!!

Here.. she is!!
Ichi!!
Ichi!
Ich...
Ahh!!
Sabu!?
W.. When did you get here...?
Heh hehe... Well, I was just out for drinks with some friends...
Hurry !!
It's horrible!
Your friends are looking for you...
What !?

Tatsu !?
... Tatsu !!
Who...
Why .. Why would they do this!?
Bigot !!
Half-wit!
Block-head!!
Look at it!!
You didn't notice...!?
D-Don't tell Me you didn't notice!!
W-Why don't you look inside your sleeve!?
T ..The seaweed wholesale vendor... Fujiokaya..
W-What does it say, Sabo!?
.....!?

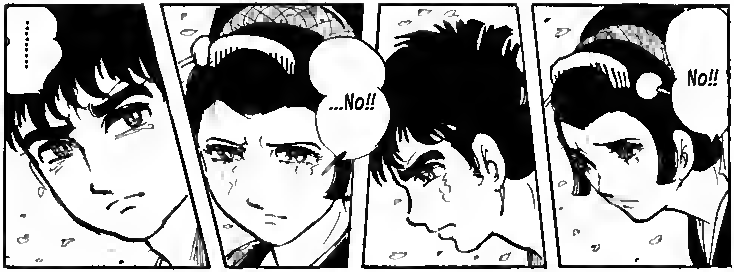
That's why we tried to draw your attention with such a blundering pick-pocketing ..!!
W-We... were trying to get you to notice him..
Yes! Fujiokaya!!
so he could monopolize the rights... And this document proves it!
..Fujiokaya ordered the seaweed grounds dispute..
That's.. That's why.. he was killed!!
T..Tatsu's father led the opposition!
..Dam-mit,
I'm going!
I'm gonna take revenge on that bastard!!
W-Wait!
I'm...
going, too!
I hope you're not thinking.. of leaving me behind!!

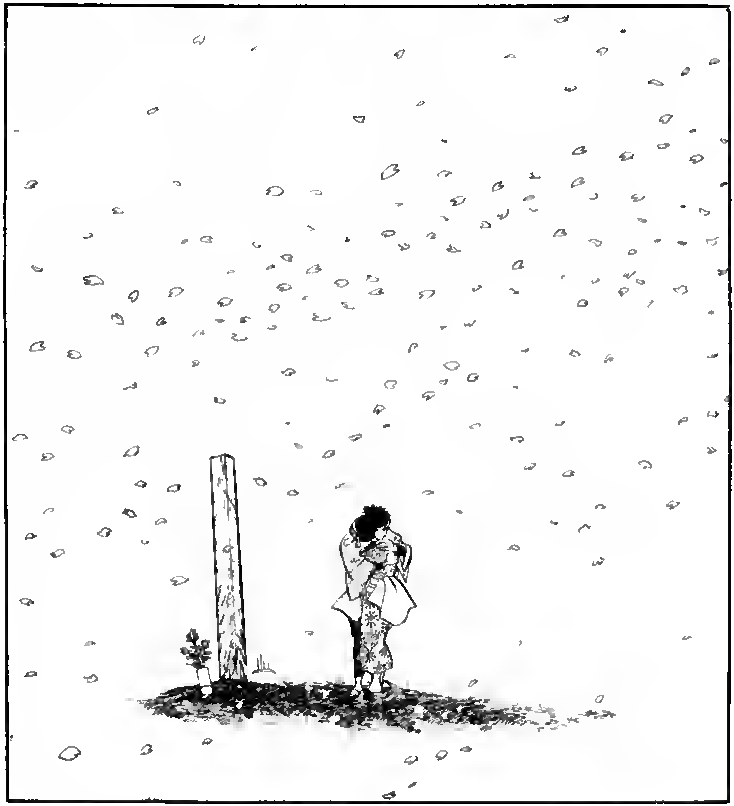
...Tatsu was killed by one of Fujiokaya's hired ronin bodyguards!
I was waiting outside Ashiya...
but by the time I noticed, it was already too late
Dammit, dammit!!
...Tatsu, sis Tatsu said... r-
right before she died...
"Tell Boss Sabu... that I was happy"...!!
.....

Tatsu!!
W-Why didn't Tatsu .. just clearly tell me about Fujiokaya ?
You god-damn idiot!!
H-Haven't you caught on yet!?
T-That's why you're such a .!!
It's true that at first we approached you.. to use you.
But you looked just like Tatsu's betrothed!!
And with those feelings .. She couldn't ask for your help!!
And... She fell for you.. Truly!!
SIGN FUJIOKAYA

Go on...
Go.
...Sabu...

巾着きり





April 1971: "Pickpocket" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控
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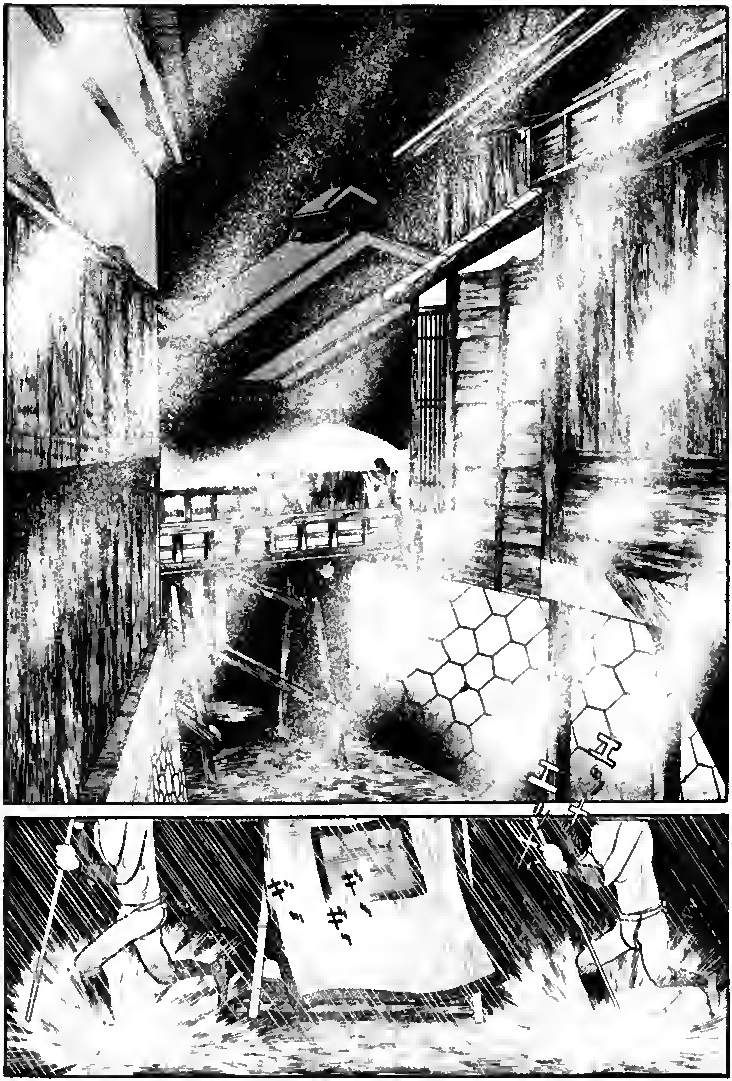
Chapter 61: Palanquin in the Rain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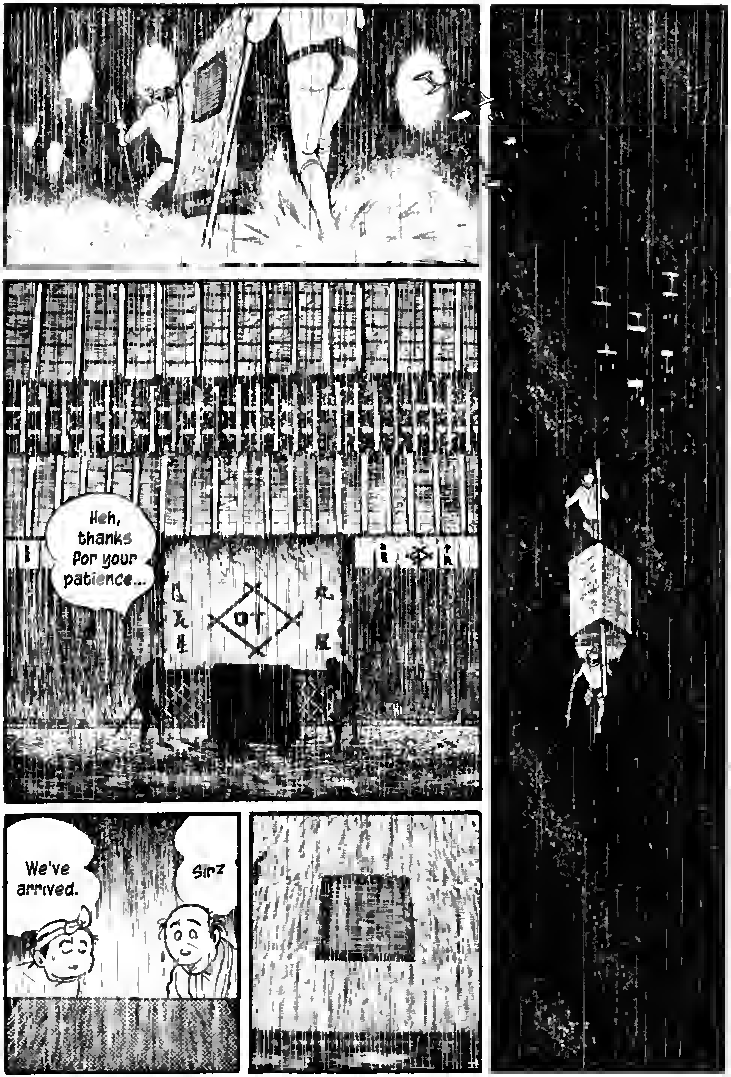
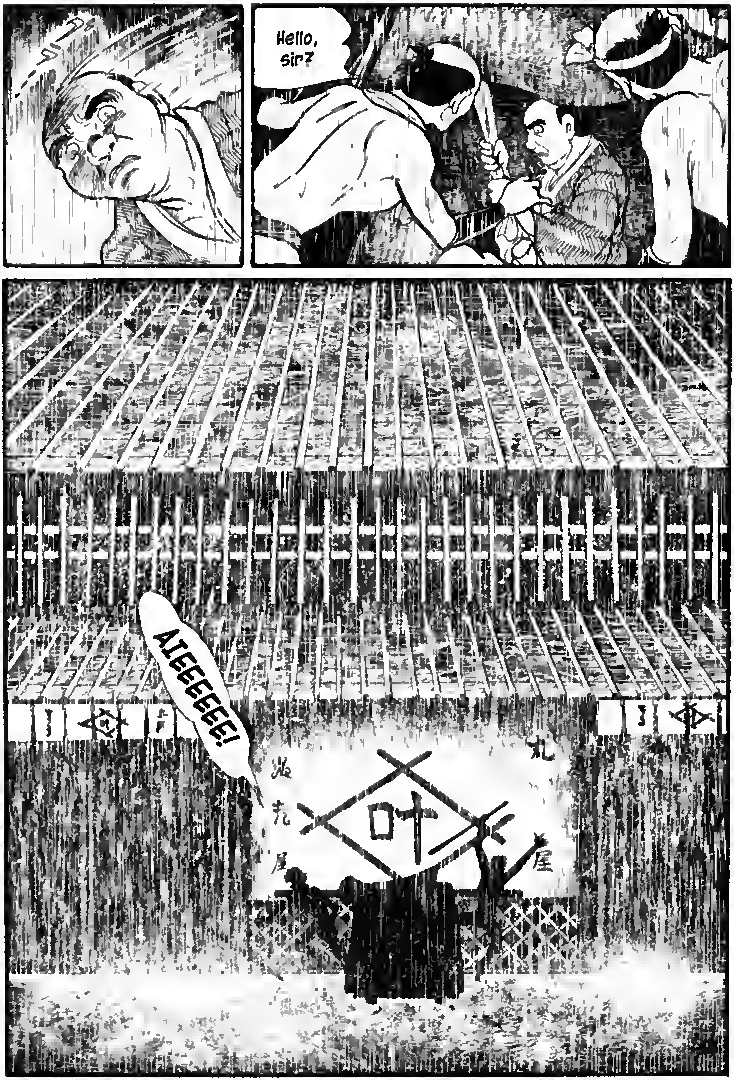
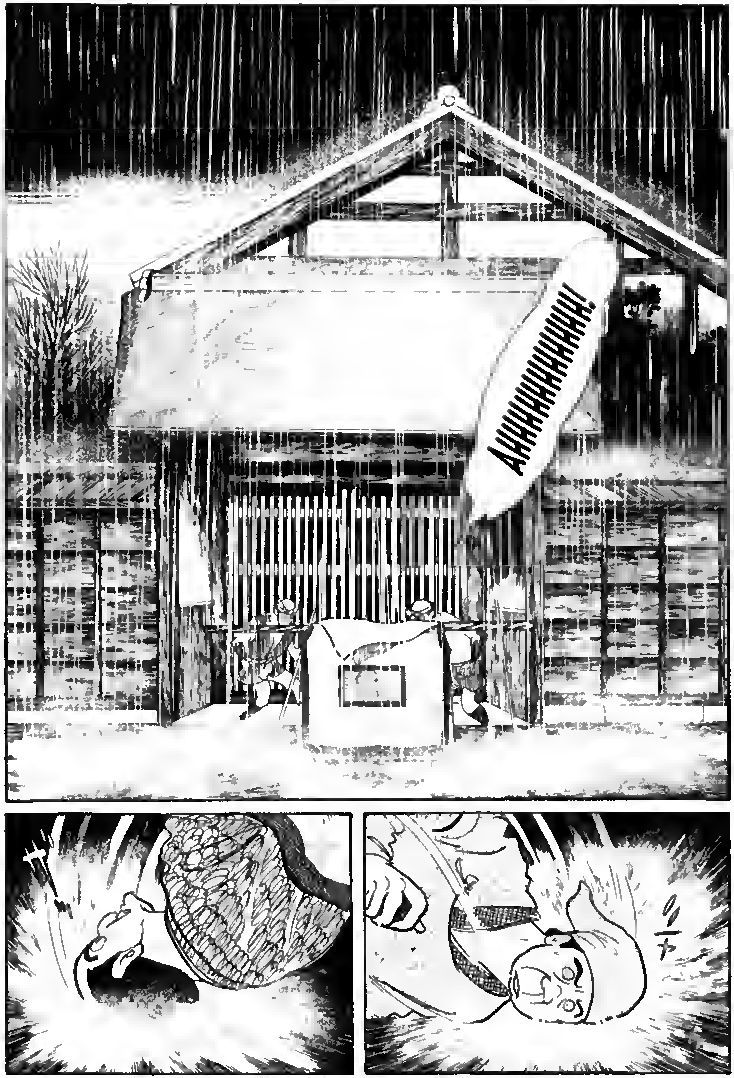
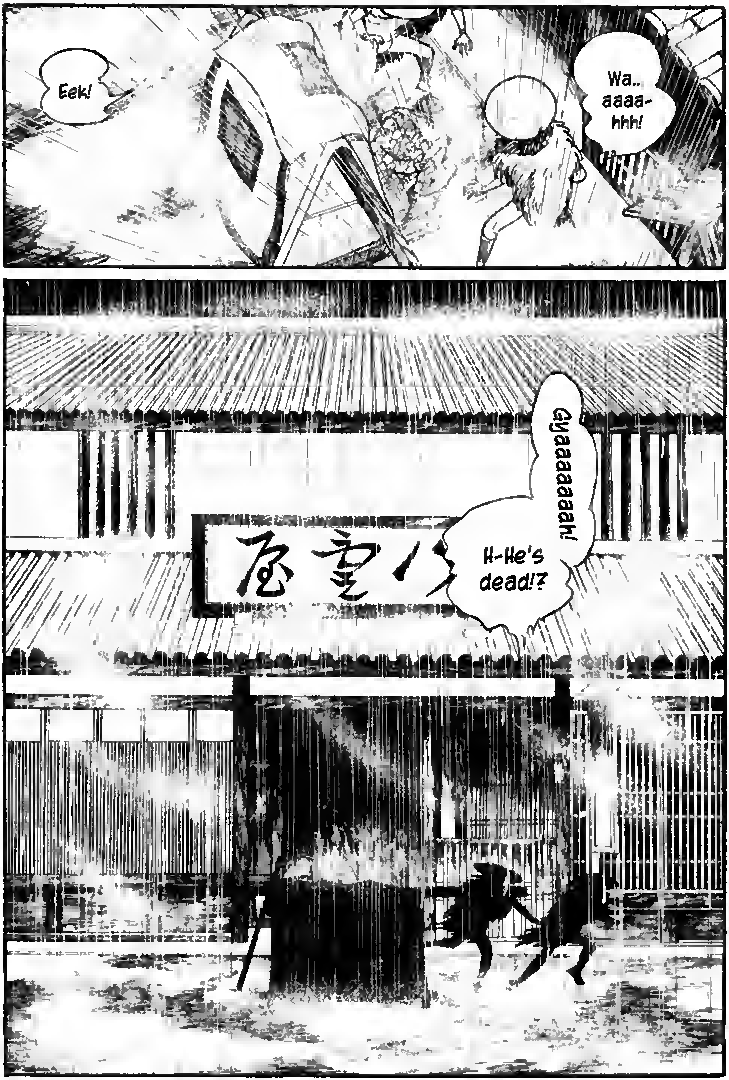

Heh, thanks for your patience...
We've arrived.
Sirz

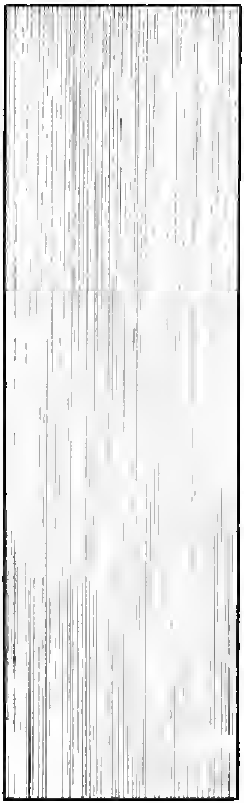

Hello, sir?
AIEEEEEE!
丸
屋


AHHHHHHHHHH!

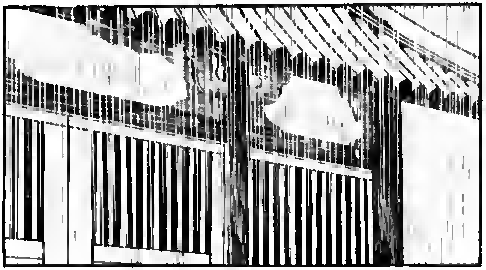

Eek!
Wa.. aaaa-hhh!
Gyaaaaaaah!
H-He's dead!?

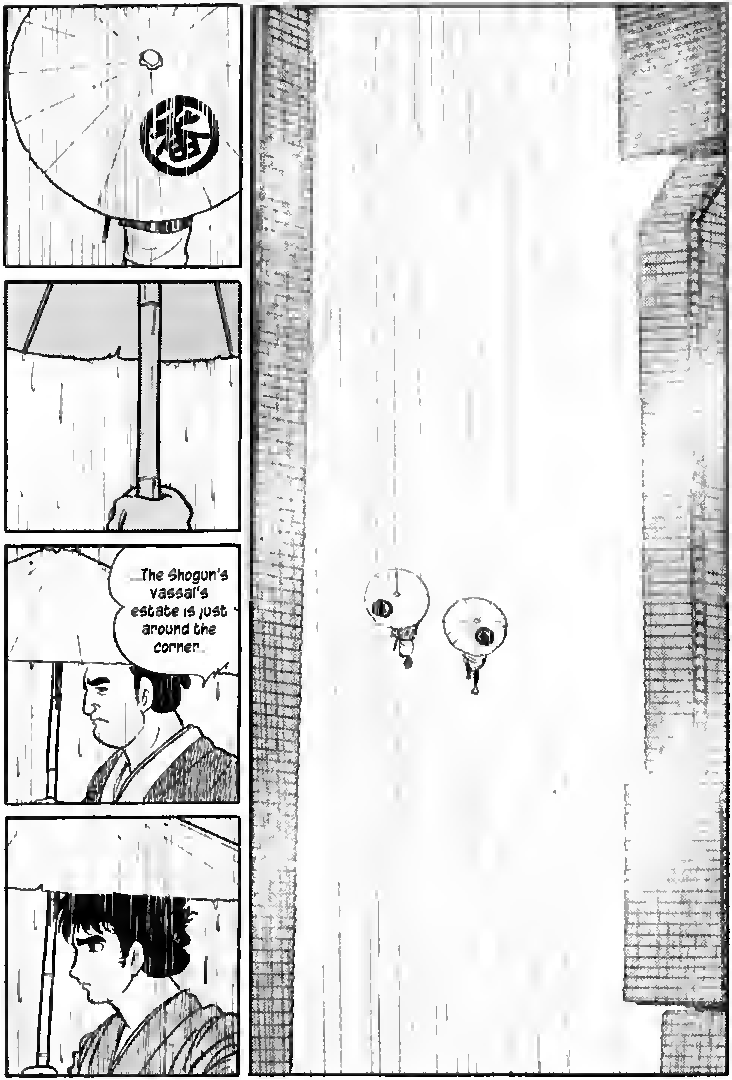
And they were all drunk and in high spirits...
Yeah, of course... to the point where they were stumbling...
...All three of them got on a palanquin here...
Is that right?
Y-
Yes...
But don't you think it's odd?
They were all standing here with their umbrellas up...
Yeah, just the three...
No, no one...
Right?
Was there anyone besides those three?
I'm sure he had a bamboo hat and straw coat... But he felt kinda like that... Yeah
Yes
And it was a man who looked like a servant... who came to pick you up?
Why would the managers of such great stores wait for a palanquin in a place like this?

So we all came to pick them up. Yes.
And that man paid one ryo up front. Y-Yes, he said he'd give us money for wine to show his appreciation for working in the rain.
Though I did find it strange that they would summon us out here.
After all... You don't need a blade to kill a palanquin-bearer, you just need three days of rain...

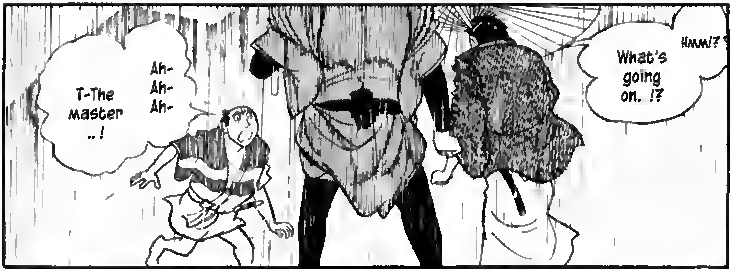


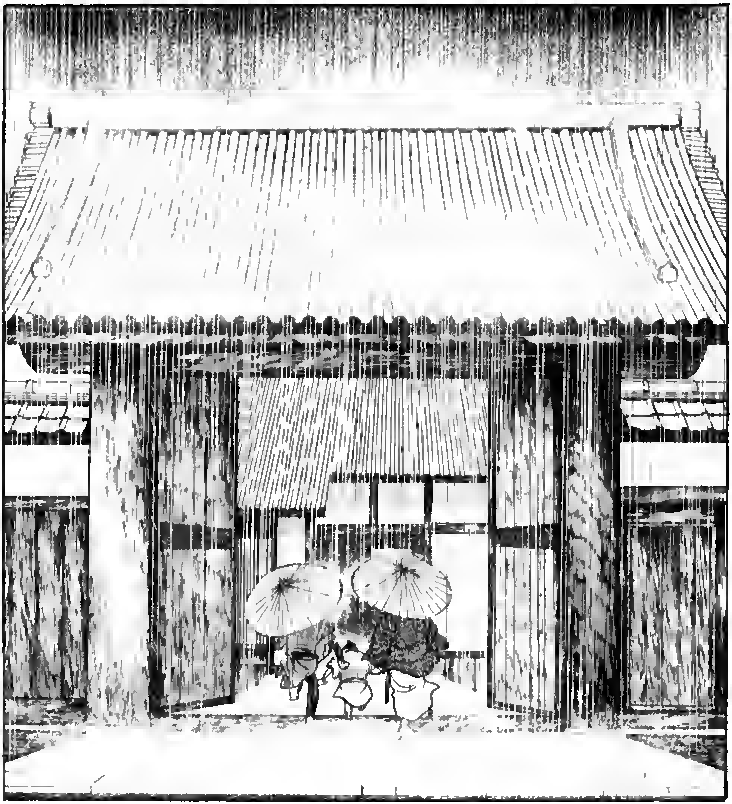
...So you picked up the three drunks and ran... And when you arrived, they were all dead and cold... right!?

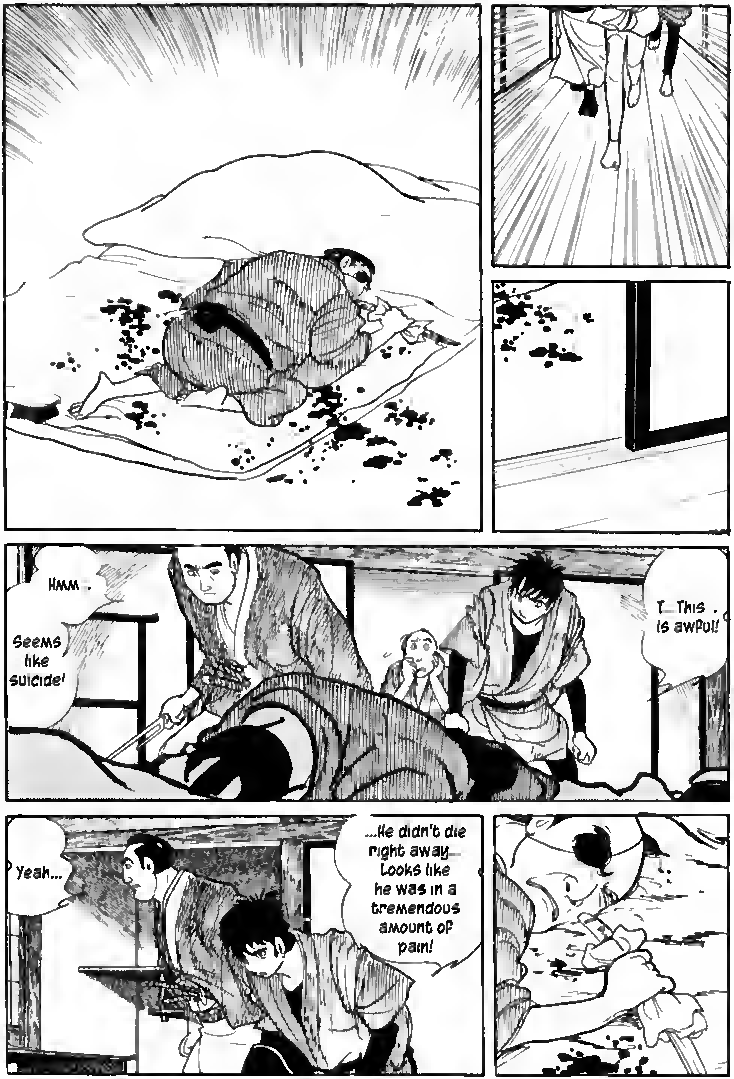



...The Shogun's vassal's estate is just around the corner...

But... Someone from the vassal's estate...
In other words, it was a retainer's steward... But that alone is barely enough of a clue.
Someone who looked like a servant went from the shrine to get the palanquins...
Yes
poisoned their drinks and killed them...
Well, yeah...
because it's unthinkable that someone murdered them while they were riding the palanquins...
I think that's undoubtable...
Waaah...
Awa-wah...


T-The master ..!
Ah- Ah- Ah-
What's going on. !?
Hmm!?

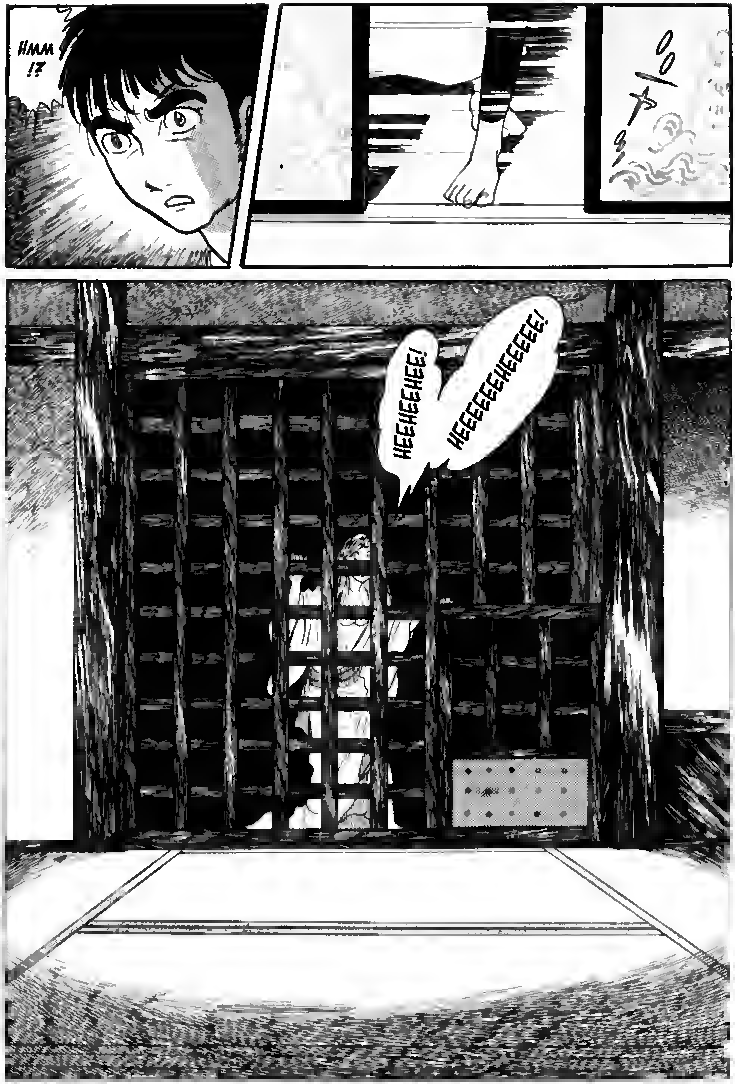



Hmm..
Seems like suicide!
T...This is awful!
Yeah...
...He didn't die right away... Looks like he was in a tremendous amount of pain!

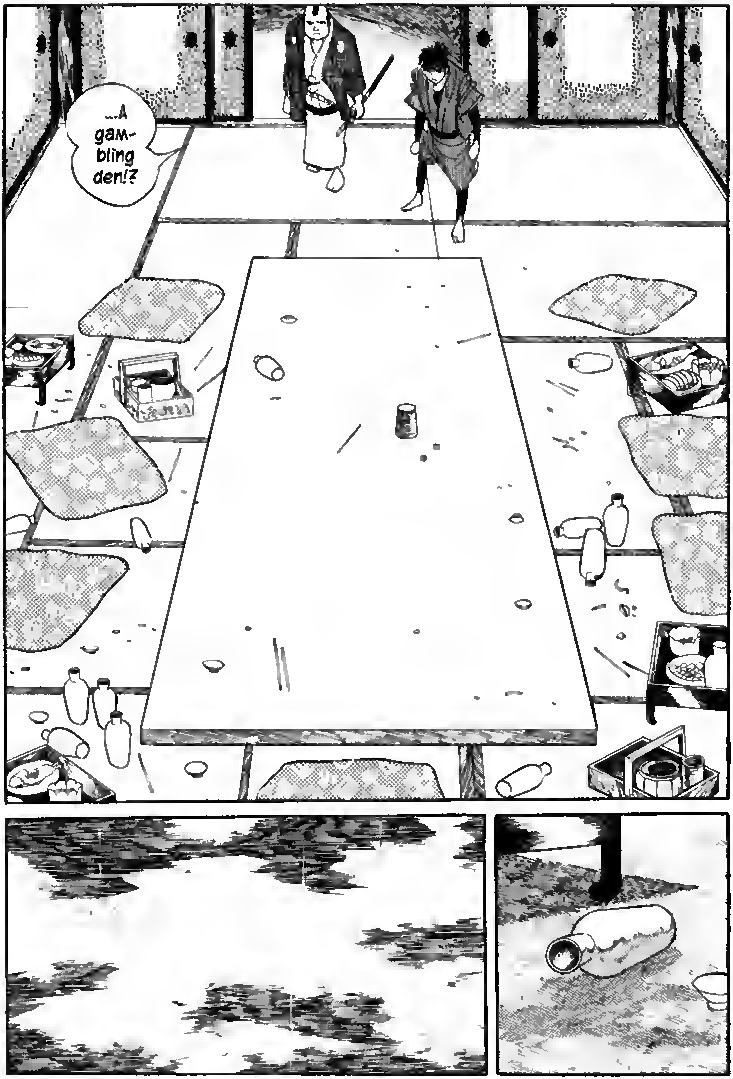
What is?
Now that's bizarre
His wife passed away four or five years ago...
Y-Yes...
Where's his wife?
So, is this everyone in the estate?
Direct vassal of the Shogun, Iwasaki Yoshiro, age forty-two...
A study book for epic songs?
It's his will. There's no will!
No, that's not it.
And no one noticed until now!?
And yet Sir Iwasaki committed suicide last night.
It's already long past the Half-Fourth Hour of the Serpent (11:00)
But don't you find it strange?
W-Well, that's because...
Y-Yes,

Y-Yes
Well... He was drinking with his guests.
So you're saying he slept late last night.. Why so late!?
Oh?
The master.. always sleeps in the entire morning after a late night.
Could... these guests you speak of.. be three merchants...!?
Hmm...
Drinking!?
Guests...!?
Huh!?
And... You went to call a palanquin for them...!
They are, right!?
H-How exactly did you know about that!?
H-Huh!?
Because all three... died of poison!

What's that!?
O-Oh, that...? That's nothing. Nothing at all.
Hmm!?
Wait...
A-Ahh, please wait!


HMM
!?
ゾゾゾ
HEEHEEHEE!
HEEEEEEHEEEEE!

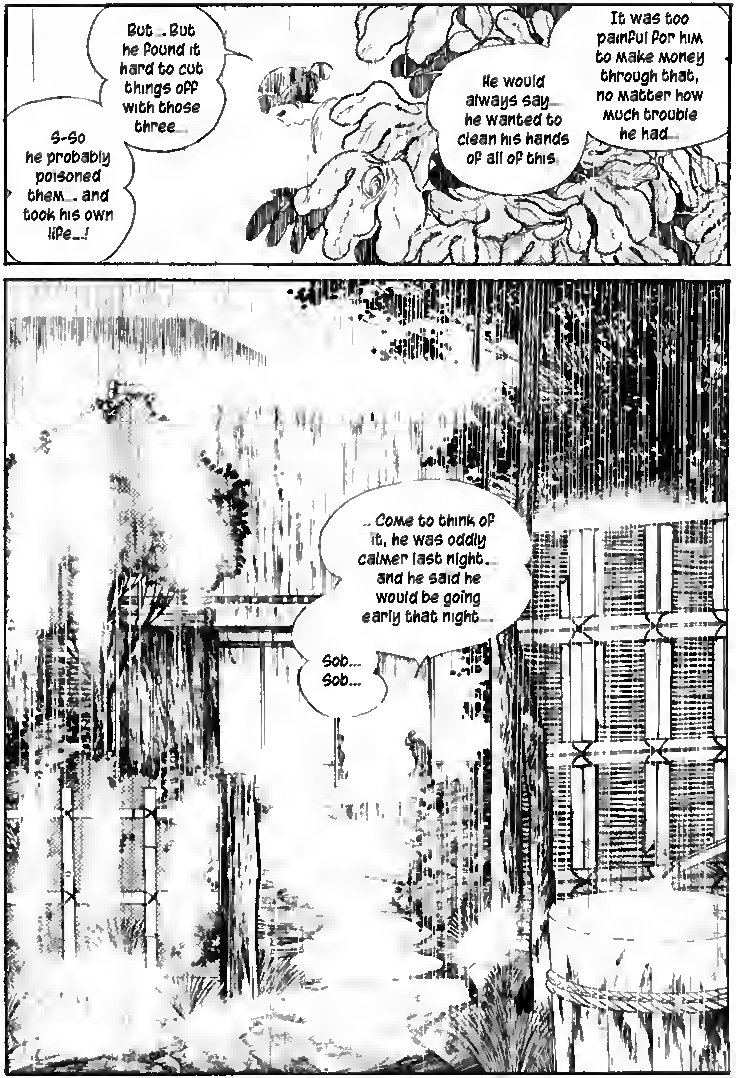
.....
And who...
.....
Is this!?
Hmm?
Hold on, sir!

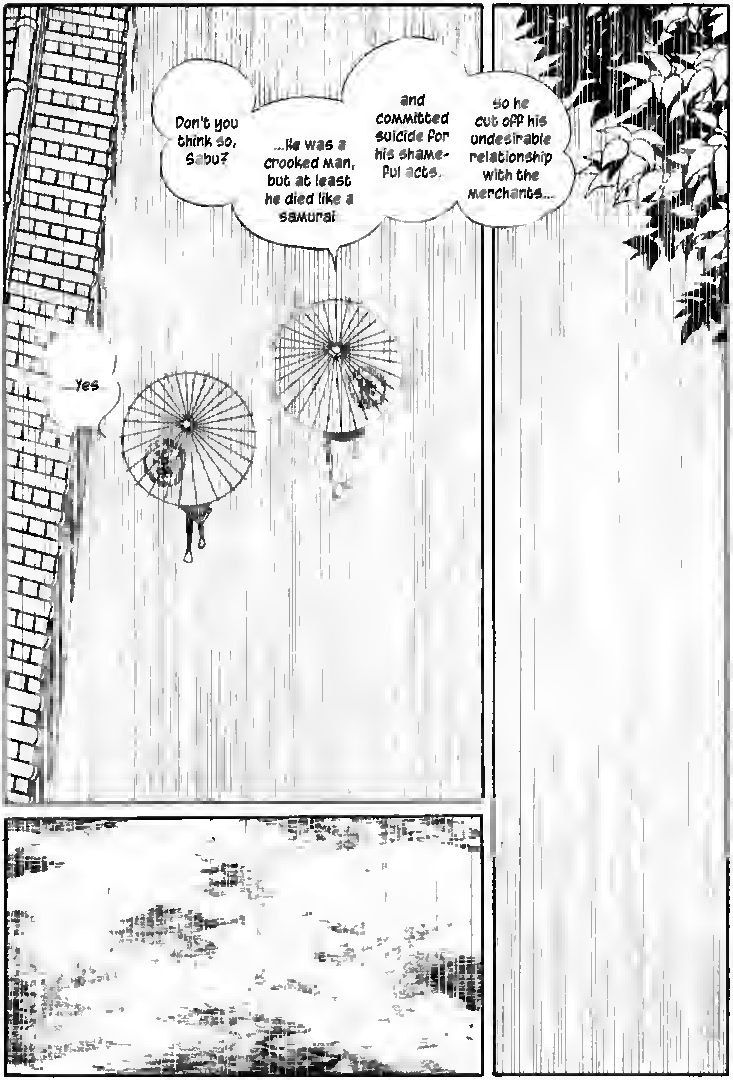

...A gambling den!?

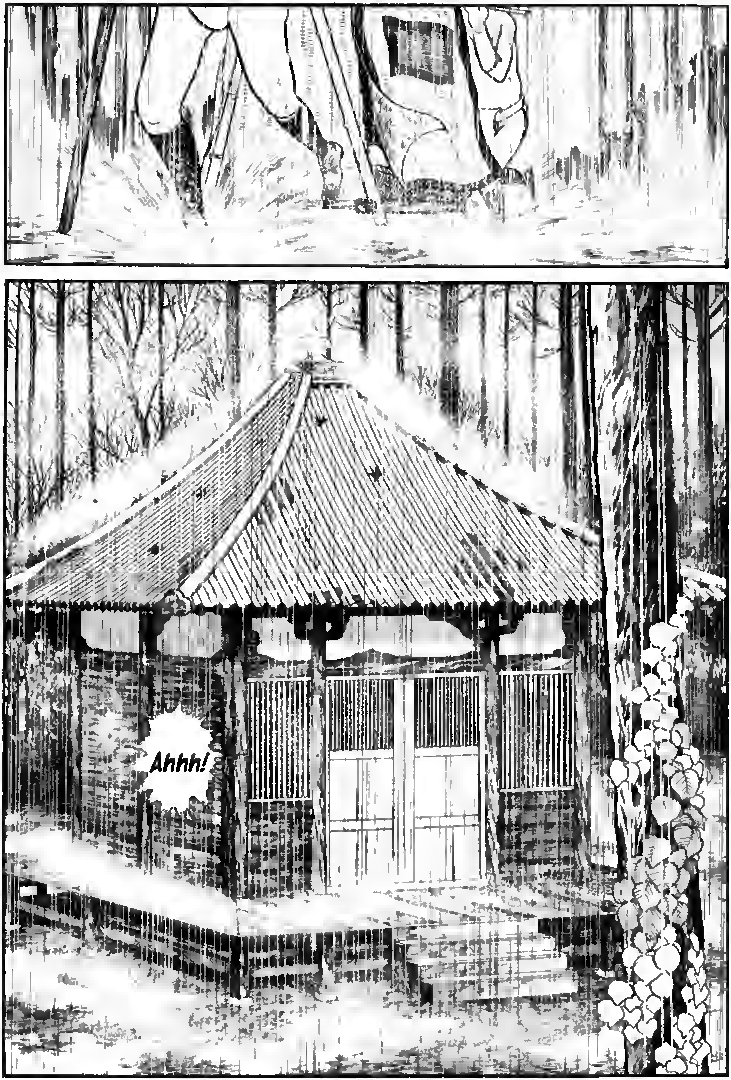
Everything... And your name came out while he talked..
Were you there last night, Cho...?
...Shosuke from Sir Iwasaki's estate told me everything he knew.
Mommy!

Okay.
You shouldn't be inside here! Go home!
Ryu!
Is that your...
...Yes
.....
Sir Iwasaki committed suicide.
And for whatever reason...
...Three managers of major stores were poisoned... and died in palanquins.

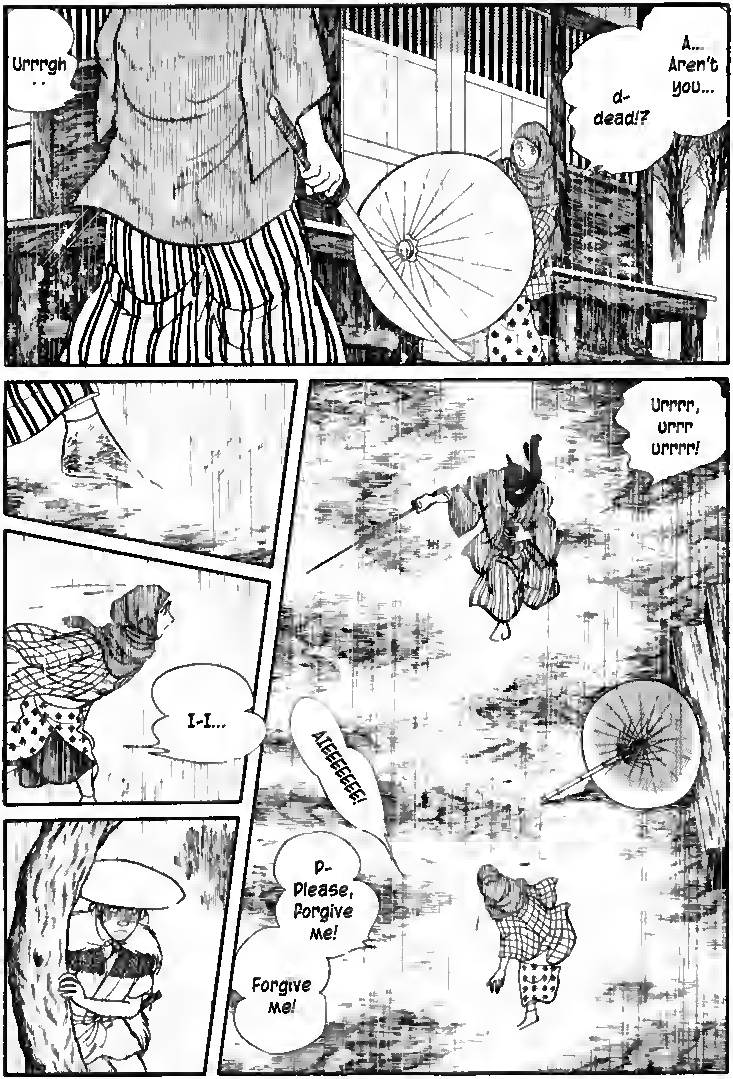
...Sir Iwasaki was using his estate as a gambling den, and used that sex-crazed woman to show his guests an indecent spectacle.
...I met that man... about five years ago...
...At first it was because I wanted to learn epic songs...
He came to have troubles with money...
But...
But ever since... I have been in his care.
But... He was still a samurai at heart
and lent his estate to the managers of major stores for gambling... and put on sensual spectacles for money...
And so... About three years ago he joined forces with those three...


It was too painful for him to make money through that, no matter how much trouble he had...
He would always say... he wanted to clean his hands of all of this.
But... But he found it hard to cut things off with those three...
S-So he probably poisoned them... and took his own life...!
...Come to think of it, he was oddly calmer last night... and he said he would be going early that night...
Sob... Sob...


Don't you think so, Sabu?
...He was a crooked man, but at least he died like a samurai
and committed suicide for his shameful acts.
so he cut off his undesirable relationship with the merchants...
Yes


Ahhh!

What's the matter?
Palanquin bearer!?
P-Palanquin bearer!?
Ahhh!?


Urrrgh
A... Aren't you... d-dead!?
Urrrr, urrr urrrr!
I-I...
AIEEEEEEEE!
P-Please, Forgive me!
Forgive me!

This letter that says... "I saw everything"...!?
S...So what's this letter for...
H-Huh!?
That's...
S..Shosuke!?
S-So you really did kill the Master after all, Cho..!?
I had him write that!
And I had him call you out here!
But...
...Shosuke... No, no one saw a thing.
W-Who are you ...!?

I didn't like how clean this conclusion was...

F-From those men!
I...I... I wanted to get away...
...So you poisoned their wine and stabbed Iwasaki...
S... Sob...
I asked them for freedom.. but those men wouldn't let me go!!
I wanted to flee.
T-They made me perform... t-those indecent spectacles with that woman!

I...I couldn't... I couldn't do that anymore...
Ryutaro... My child was growing, so I had to stop...
A-And yet... And yet, he threatened to kill me if I didn't do as he said...

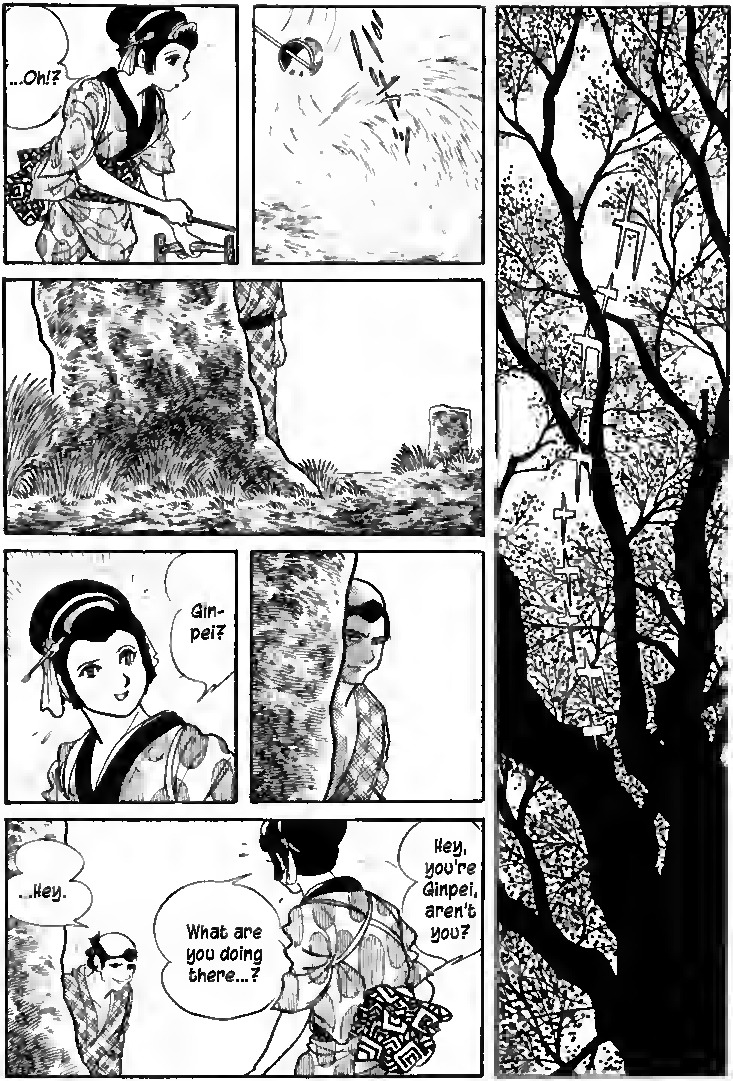
...So I had no other choice... to make my body clean again...
Ahh, ahh, ahhhh!
I . didn't have any other choice..
.....

雨駕籠

June 1, 70: "Palanquin in the Rain" (FIN)

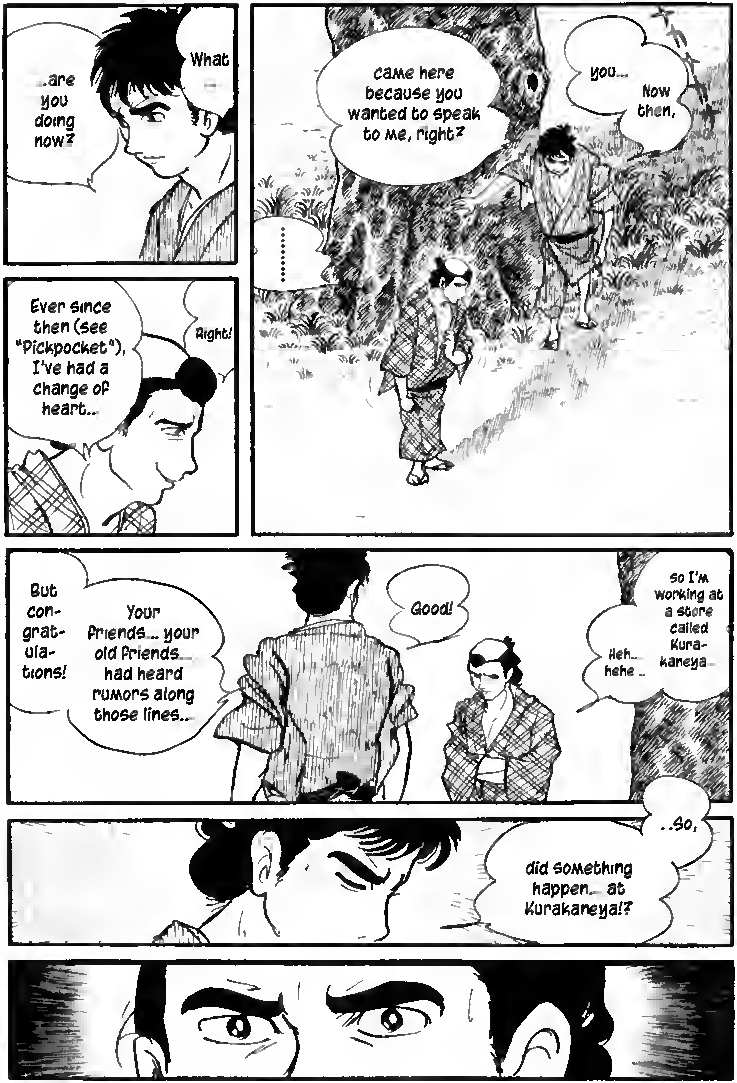
佐武と市捕物控
SABU & ICHI
CHAPTER 61
PRESENTED BY
HOKUTO NO GUN
AND HAPPY SCANS
TRANSLATED BY
SYSTEMATICCHAOS
CLEANED BY
WRIGHT
TYPESETTING BY
KAZUHIKO
PROOFREADING BY
ANGELOFCHAOTIX
CREDITS PAGE BY
FROBMAN
WRITTEN BY
ISHINOMORI
SHOTARO

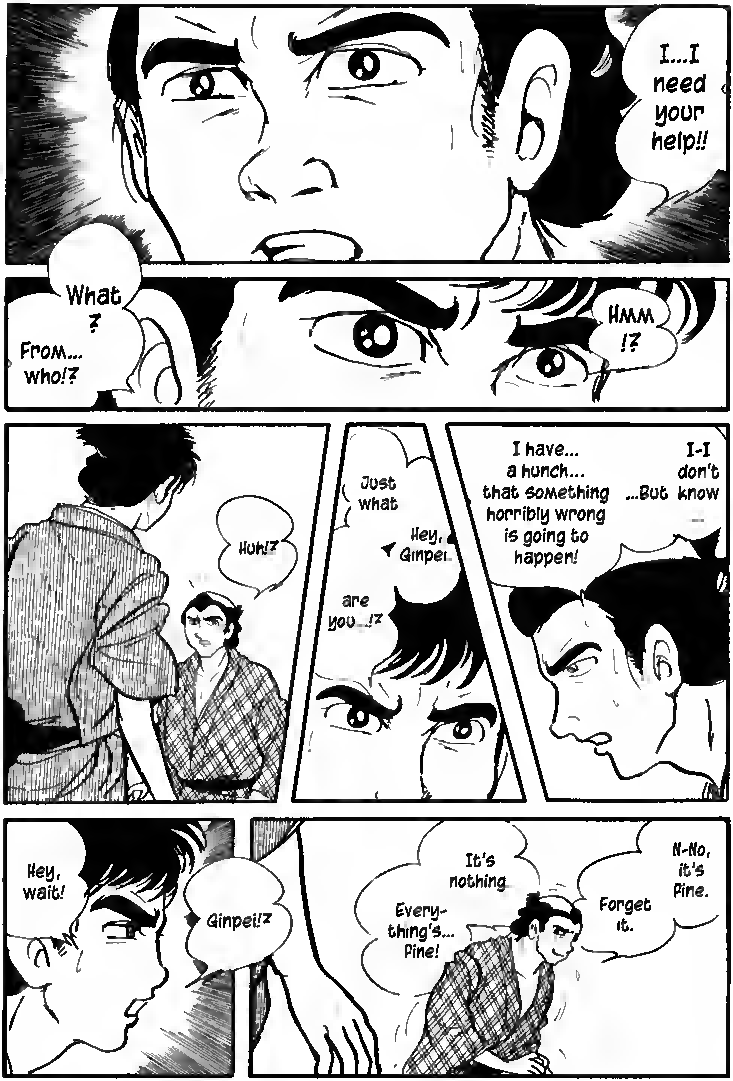
Chapter 62: Floating Lanterns


...Oh!?
Ginpei?
...Hey.
What are you doing there...?
Hey, you're Ginpei, aren't you?

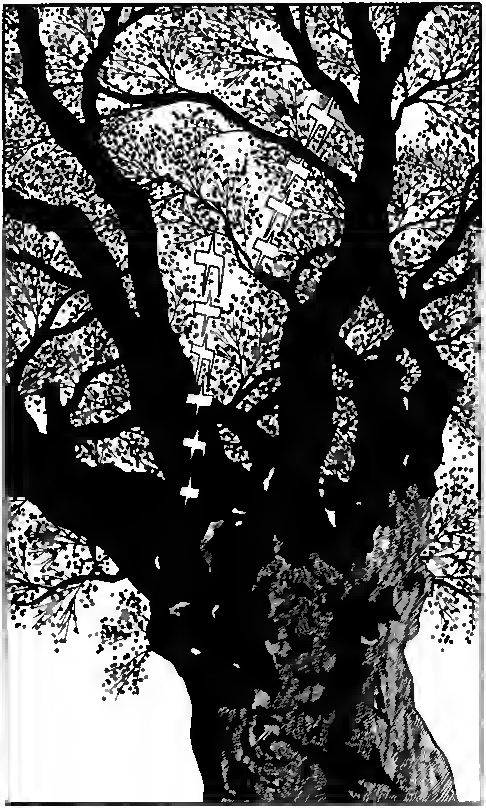
I think Sabu will be home shortly
Now, go ahead...
...Sorry I've been out of touch...
Oh, don't be like that!
You could've just called... and come inside!
N-No...
Ginpei!
I-I'll... stop by again soon
I just came to this area.. and I felt nostalgic.. and I was remembering things...
Oh, Sabu!
...Hey!

Come inside...
We haven't seen each other in a while. Now, come...
Oh, we can't have that!
I told him you weren't home so he was about to leave...
Thank goodness!
...The truth is...
Huh?
.....
Don't leave now, Ginpei!
go straighten up... and get everything in order...
Well, I'll


What...
...are you doing now?
came here because you wanted to speak to me, right?
Now then, you...
.....
Right!
Ever since then (see "Pickpocket"), I've had a change of heart...
But congratulations!
Your friends... your old friends... had heard rumors along those lines...
Good!
Heh... hehe...
so I'm working at a store called Kurakaneya...
..So, did something happen... at Kurakaneya!?


I...I need your help!!
What?
From... who!?
Hmm!?
Huh!?
Just what are you...!?
Hey, Ginpei
I have... a hunch... that something horribly wrong is going to happen!
I-I don't ...But know
Hey, wait!
Ginpei!?
It's nothing.
Every-thing's... Fine!
Forget it.
N-No, it's Fine.

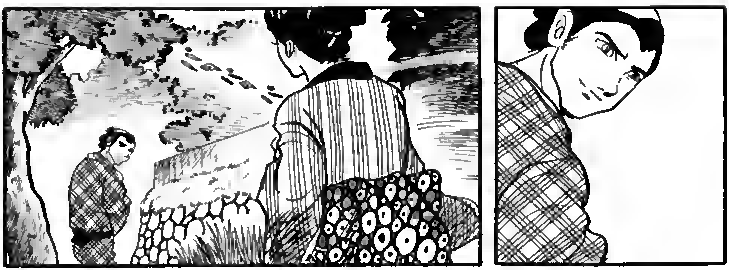
Ginpei!!
I'll... be back again soon enough...!!
Give Midori... My regards!



.....
Father!
Father!!
A...
Ahhh...
That Ginpei..
murdered someone!!
Huh?
What!?
N-No... That must be a mistake!!
He would never...!
But
I saw the scene of the crime . and he confessed himself!
...That's what I want to believe!

W... Why ?
Who... and why!?
That ...
goddamn idiot...!!

屋金倉



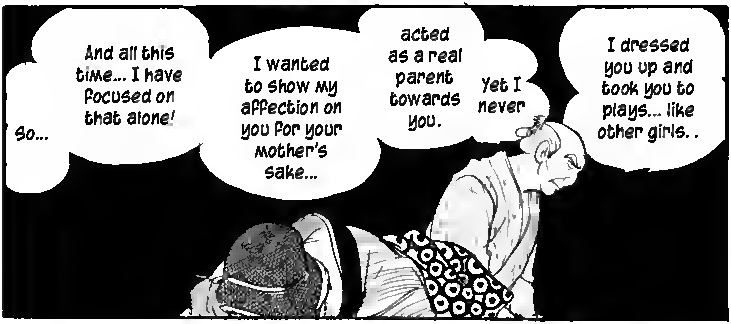
...Did your Father... find you?
.....
..Tee hee...
...Here.
.....
No... It's fine.
.. But now that I think of it... I feel like I understand.. what your father said.
But the young master of a big store like Yoshinoya..
...If I had a daughter, that would only be reasonable!
...Nothing good could come of an apprentice like me.

I... don't want any man but you, no matter what anyone says...!!
No! What are you saying, Ginpei?
I'll plead with him .. My father listens to all my requests...!!
I swear.. I'll convince my father...
...I-I'm fine...
Shino!!

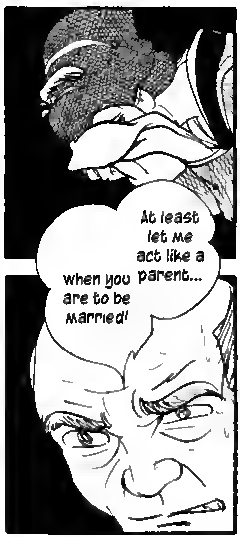
I told you you shouldn't see him anymore...
Why won't you obey your father?
Shino!
You... saw Ginpei again, didn't you?
.....
I... I-I love Ginpei!!
B-But Father,
No!!
I just talked with that Madam,
...See,
and the young master of Yoshinoya would like to formalize..
That man... That youngster with no good parentage...!
You fool!!
Shino!!
I won't be wed to anyone else...!!
I-If I... can't be wed to Ginpei...
No, no!

We're just like Ginpei.. Mere employees of Kurakaneya.. !!
but neither do we!
You may say he has no good parentage...
Ah!
Fool!!
I-I'm sorry, Shino ...!
I didn't mean to raise a hand
Y...Your Father
is only trying to think about your happiness
Sob, sob, sob...
Waaaaaaaah!!
.....

I have gone through great hardship to raise you...!
...Ever since your mother died when you were young..
...Your father ... would do anything for you.


So...
And all this time... I have focused on that alone!
I wanted to show my affection on you for your mother's sake...
Yet I never acted as a real parent towards you.
I dressed you up and took you to plays... like other girls..

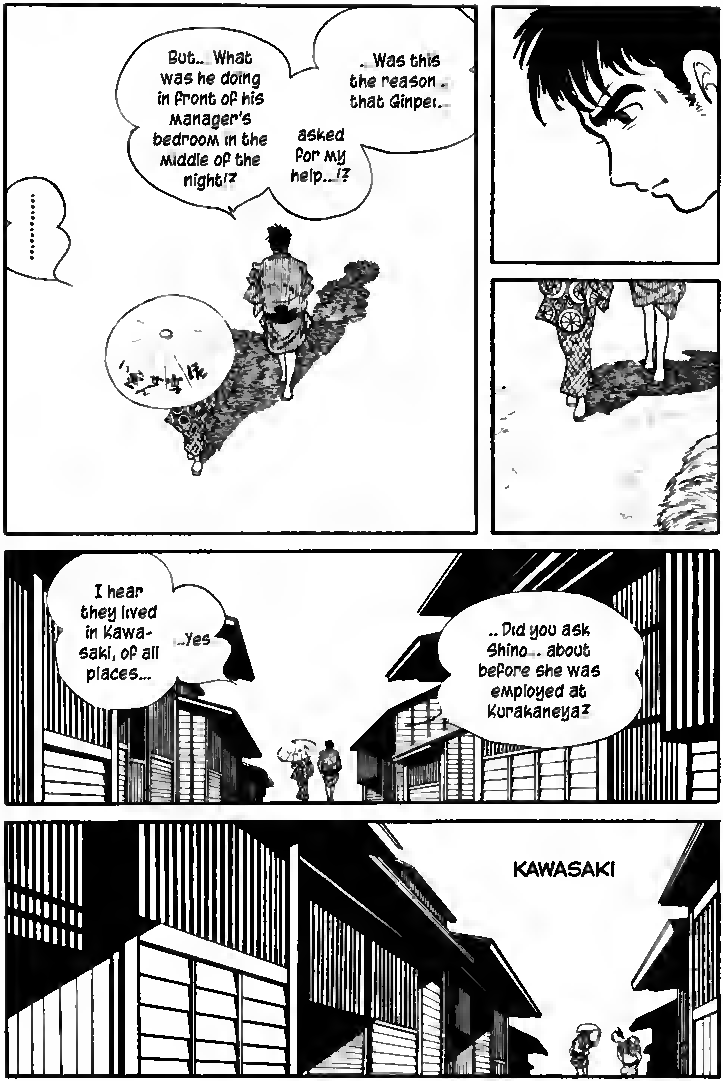
.....
...Father!
Father!!

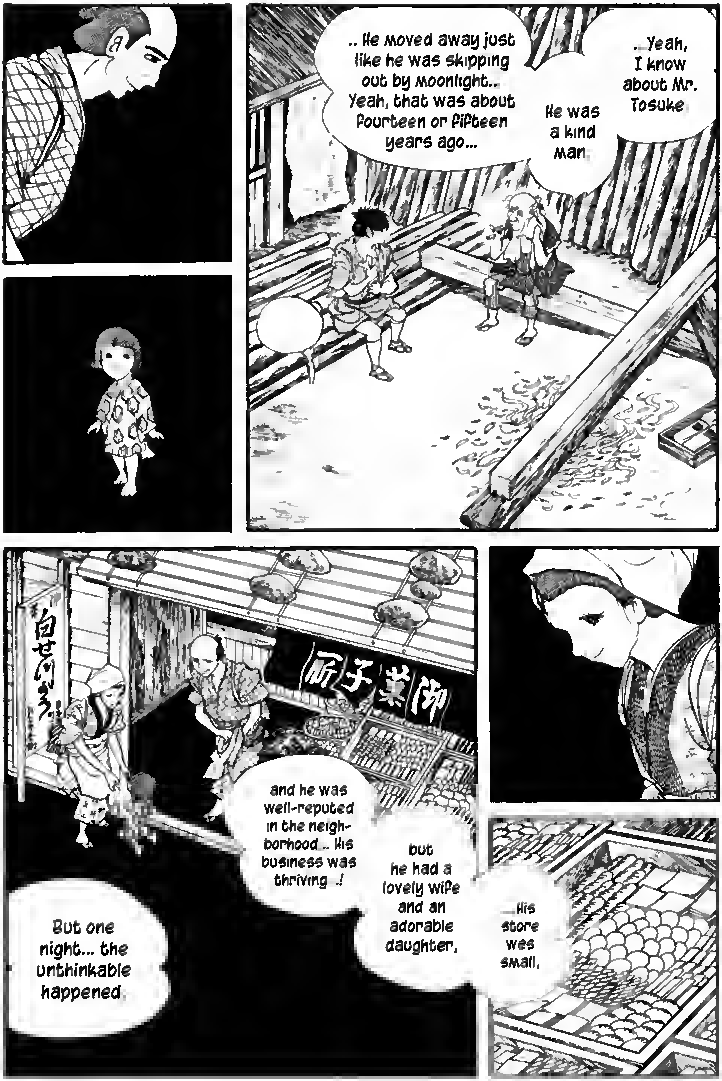

At least let me act like a parent... when you are to be married!

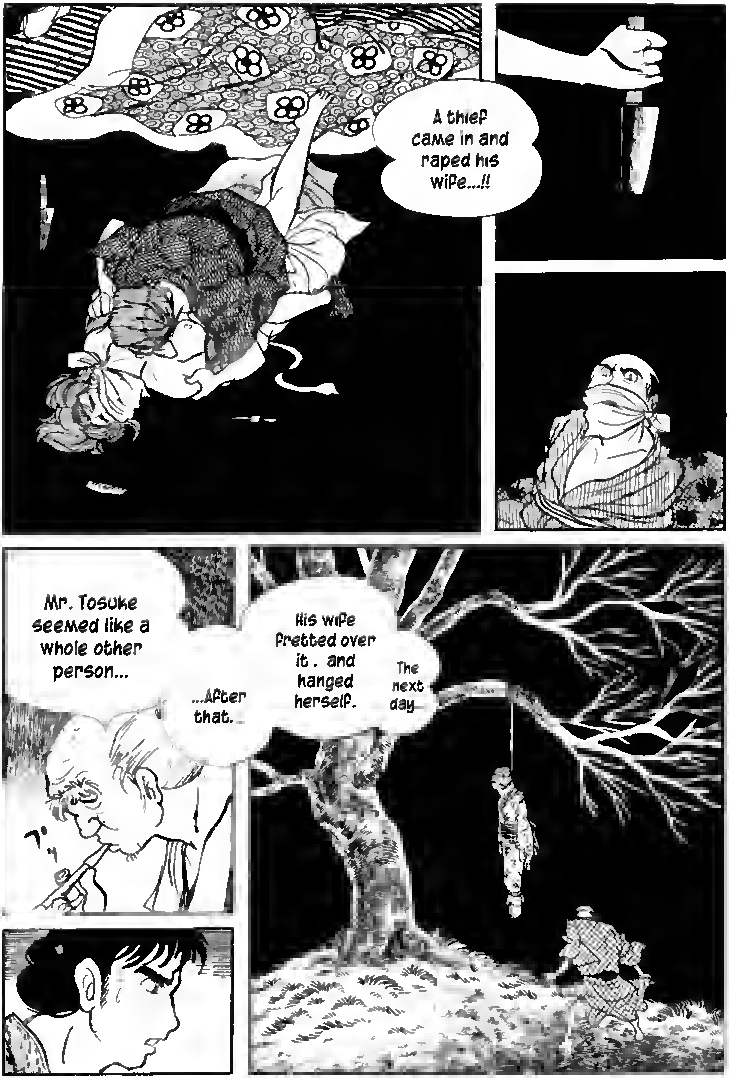
..So Ginpei...
your Father !!
Mur-dered...

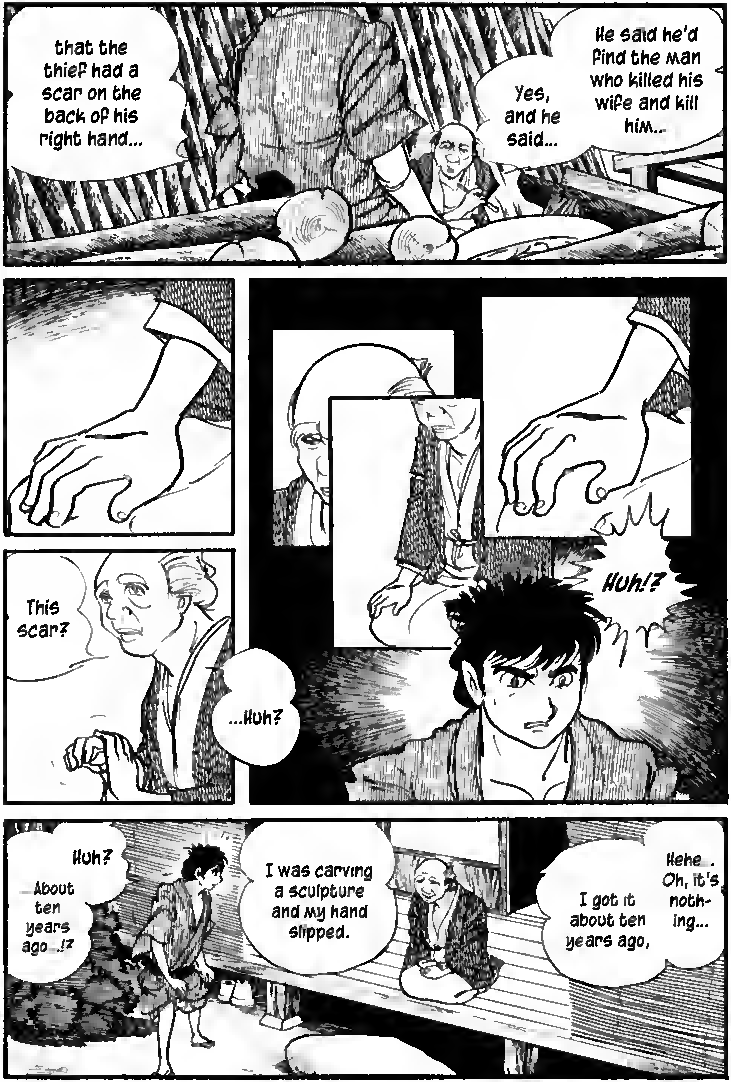
SIGN KURAKANEYA
...We wanted Shino...
so she could be wed to Yoshinoya.
...to be taken in as our daughter...
Yes.
.....
..I am certain he is sorrowed
that things turned out this way
The young master of Yoshinoya is young, yet has a very fine character. .
So we told him we will arrange it as soon as the mourning is over, and Shino's emotions subside...

..T-The night before...
My father told me to have my way..
...and to do what I wanted, if I thought that would bring me happiness ..
..He said he would refuse Yoshiwara's proposal... Yes...
He had said that...!!
.....


But... What was he doing in front of his manager's bedroom in the middle of the night!?
...Was this the reason that Ginpei asked for my help...!?
.....
I hear they lived in Kawasaki, of all places...
...Yes
...Did you ask Shino... about before she was employed at Kurakaneya!?
KAWASAKI


..He moved away just like he was skipping out by moonlight.. Yeah, that was about fourteen or fifteen years ago...
He was a kind man.
...Yeah, I know about Mr. Tosuke.
but he had a lovely wife and an adorable daughter.
and he was well-reputed in the neighborhood... his business was thriving..!
But one night... the unthinkable happened.
...his store was small.


A thief came in and raped his wife...!!
Mr. Tosuke seemed like a whole other person...
...After that...
His wife fretted over it, and hanged herself.
The next day...

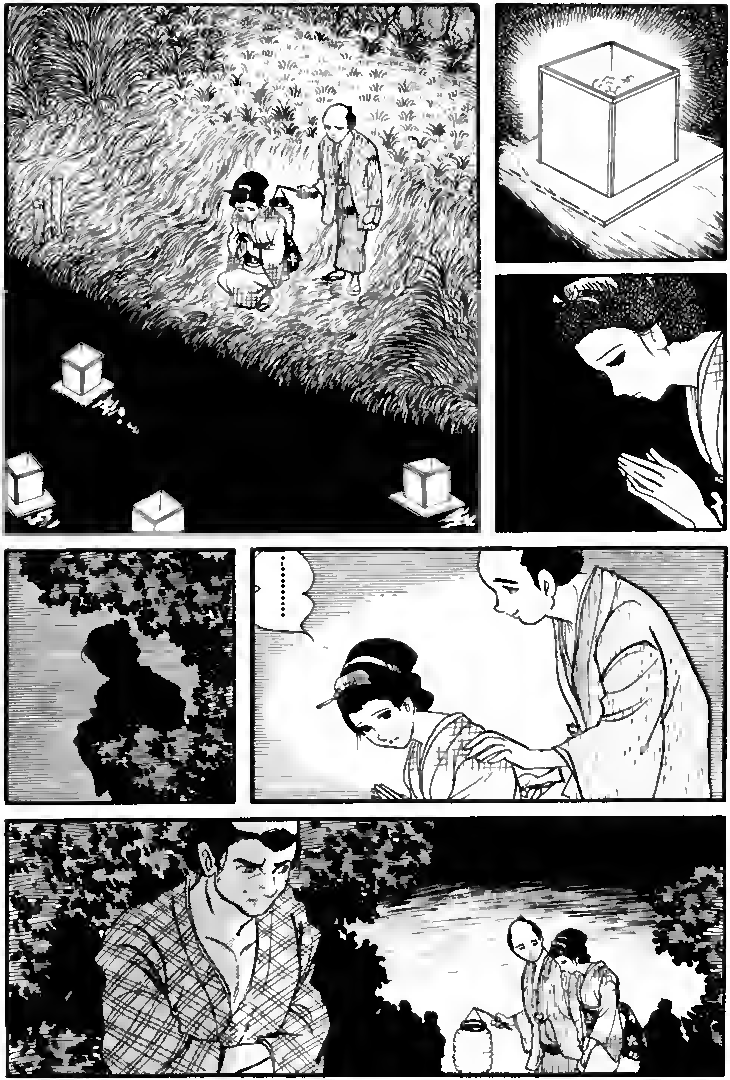

He said he'd find the man who killed his wife and kill him...
Yes, and he said...
that the thief had a scar on the back of his right hand...
Huh!?
This scar?
...Huh?
Huh?
About ten years ago...!?
I was carving a sculpture and my hand slipped.
I got it about ten years ago,
Hehe. Oh, it's nothing...

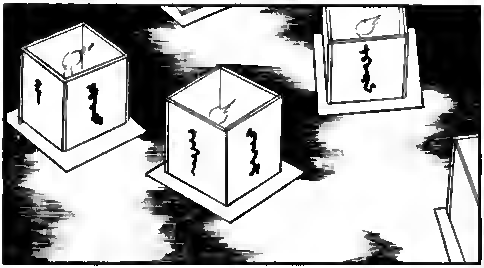
Huh?
...It didn't happen to be fifteen or sixteen years ago, did it...!?
Huh?
I-Is... that true!?
I don't know what you're talking about... but why don't I call my wife and ask her for you.. ?
Katsu !!
Hey, Katsu!
I was truly surprised when it happened...
Yes
But strangely enough, I enjoy carving... though you could say I'm a dabster..
.. I may be a merchant..
I still do it.. but I started about ten years ago ..

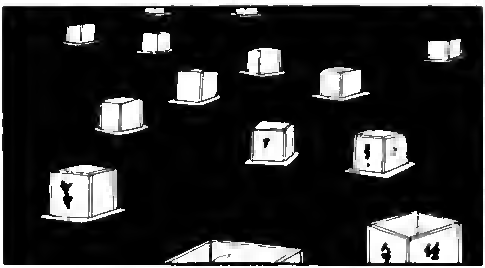
...So that's how it was...!!
...I saw something one night.
And that happened several times...
Her father concealed a dagger and snuck in to his manager's bedroom...!

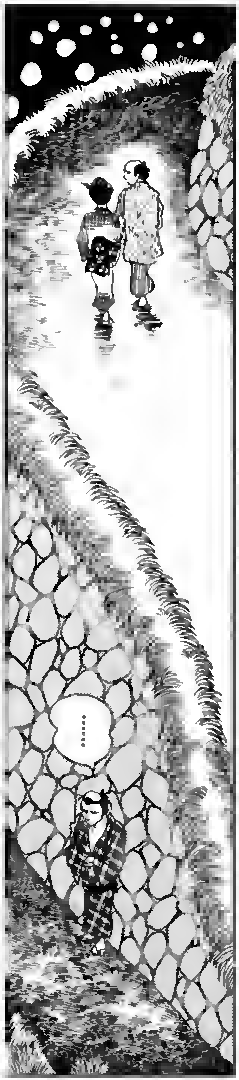
And finally, that night..
I thought I'd ask for your help...
and I thought about looking into it... but I couldn't understand.. So...
He seemed to be keeping watch for when his manager was vulnerable.
I-I have to kill him!!
Urrrgh!
L-Let me go!
What do you think you're doing!?
S-Stop it!
B-But sir...!!
I said let me go!!
Let me go!
I-I have to kill him, no matter what!
I'll kill him... and leave this household!!

Huh ...?
S... Sir ...!!?
Ggh!
W-Why didn't you...
From the start!?
tell me it was an accident
Y-You idiot!!
.....
Could you say it?
Could you say... that the father of the girl you love... attempted murder...!?









IN THE MORNING MIST,

A SINGLE LANTERN FLOATING,

HINDERED BY A TREE

August 10, 1971. "Floating Lanterns" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控
SABU & ICHI
CHAPTER 62
PRESENTED BY
HOKUTO NO GUN
AND HAPPY SCANS
TRANSLATED BY
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ISHINOMORI
SHOTARO

Chapter 63: Needle

DECEMBER 8TH: MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLD NEEDLES

IT IS WIDELY SAID ALONG THE COAST OF JAPAN THAT DECEMBER 8TH IS THE DAY THAT THE FISH KNOWN AS THE BALLOONFISH DRIFTS TO THE SHORE.

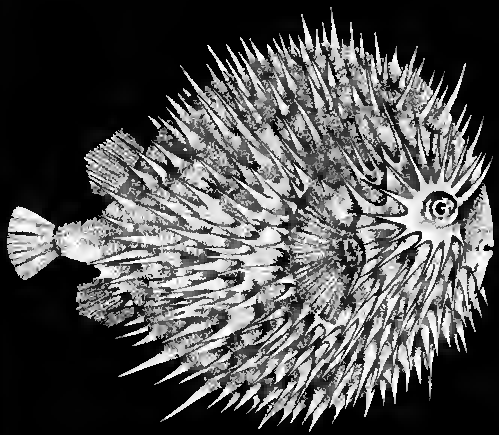
IT IS NOT LIMITED TO THIS DAY, BUT AS TROPICAL FISH, THEY ALL GATHER NEAR THE COAST WHEN THE WEATHER IS COLD. (ALL ABOUT FISH)

IN THE AREA OF FUSHIKI (SHINMINATO CITY) IN TOYAMA PREFECTURE, A BRIDE WHO WAS TORMENTED BY HER MOTHER-IN-LAW WAS FALSELY ACCUSED OF A CRIME OF STEALING THE NEEDLES FROM HER PINCUSHION, AND THREW HERSELF INTO THE SEA ON THIS DAY.

AND EVEN NOW, THE SEA RAGES FROM THE DAY BEFORE THAT DAY. EVERY HOUSEHOLD THAT HAS A DAUGHTER RESTS FROM NEEDLEWORK FOR HALF A DAY TO REMEMBER HER.

AND SO, THIS DAY IS KNOWN AS THE DAY OF THE BALLOONFISH. (COUNTRYSIDE STUDIES, 1 OF 10)

IT IS NORMAL TO CELEBRATE THIS ON DECEMBER 8TH IN KANSAI AND KYUSHU, BUT THE CITY OF KAGOSHIMA ALONE CELEBRATED THIS ON FEBRUARY 8TH, AND THIS CUSTOM MAY HAVE COME FROM EDO, FROM KONJAC AND TOFU PINNED ON AN OFFERING STAND WITH A NEEDLE. (EVENTS OF THE YEAR)



Gyah!

URGH!
You bastard!!
Go!
Now!!

...Are you the leader?
You blew it!
It would be one thing if I could ...
But aiming for a blind man's eyes achieves nothing!
B-Blind!?

I'M...
blind, too!!

IN HYOGO PREFECTURE, IF A BALLOONFISH, A SPECIES OF PUFFERFISH, IS FOUND LYING ON THE BEACH, ITS TAIL IS TIED WITH STRING AND HUNG ON A GATEWAY, TO SERVE AS A CHARM TO WARO OFF OEMONS ANO PLAGUE. (FROM THE CUSTOMS OF BUOOHISM)

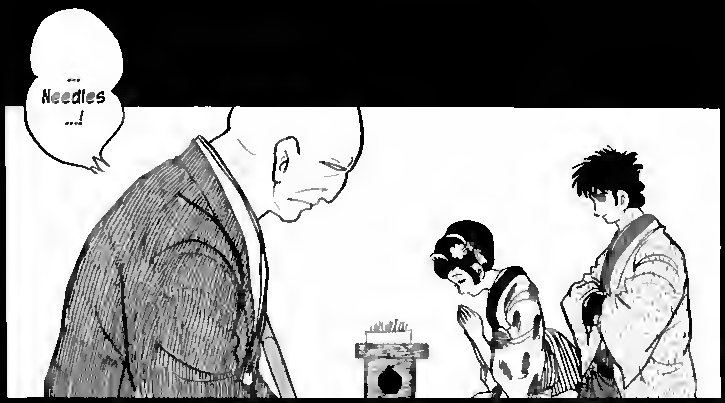
IT IS A WIDESPREAD CUSTOM TO HOLD THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLD NEEDLES IN ALL OISTRICTS OF ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE ON THE EIGHTH OF THE TWELFTH MONTH, BUT MANY THERE DO NOT KNOW WHAT A BALLOONFISH IS, ANO INSTEAD USE STUFFEO URCHINS ANO CELEBRATE THE PATRON GOO OF NEEDLES. (FROM PICTORAL OF CUSTOMS)

WHEN THE BALLOONFISH IS THREATENEO, IT EXPANOS ITSELF LIKE A PORCUPINE ANO SURROUNOS ITS BODY WITH SHARP SPINES, PROTECTING ITSELF. (FROM THE REFERENCE BOOK OF FISH ANO SHELLFISH)

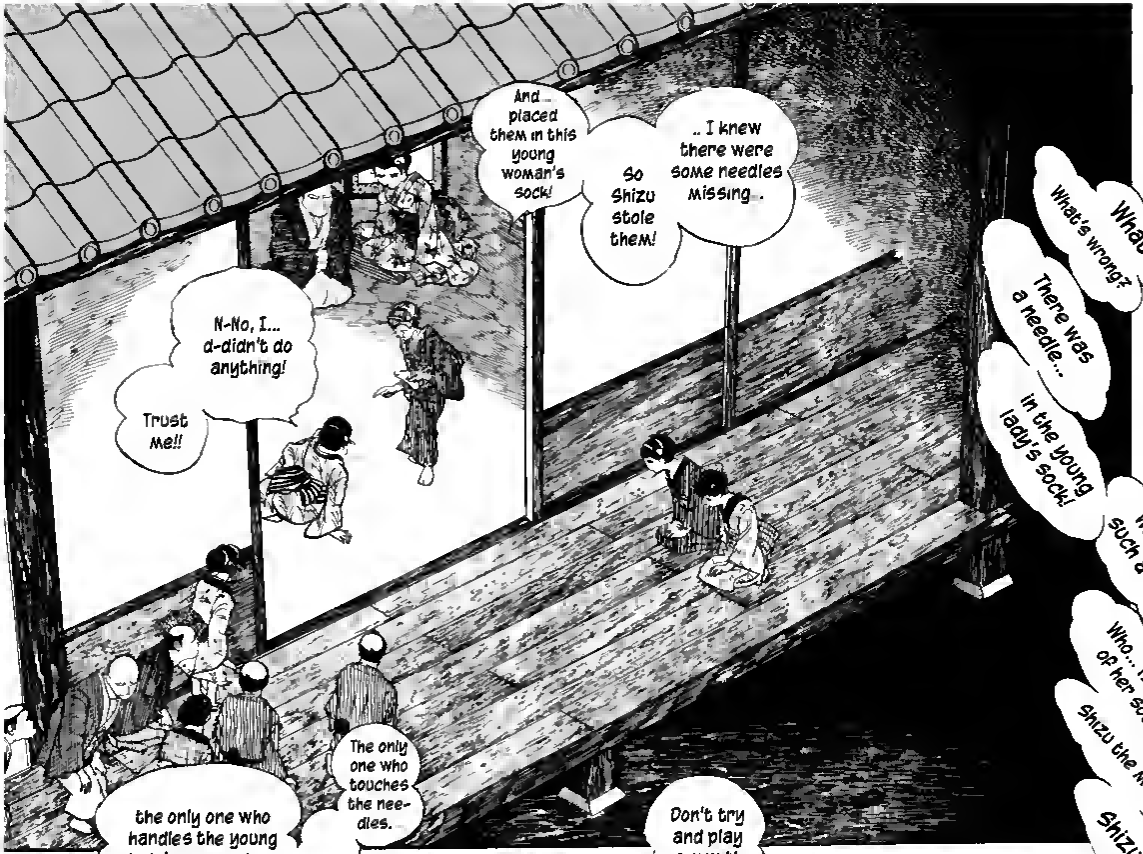
DECEMBER 8TH: MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLO NEEOLES

IN KOFU CITY, ASIDE FROM RESTING FROM NEEDLEWORK, THEY ALWAYS EAT KONJAC ANO BOILEO RADISH. (FROM THE FALLEN LEAVES OF KAI)

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLD NEEDLES OF TSUSHIMA IS ALSO ON OECEMBER 8TH, AND THEY WRAP NEEDLES IN PAPER AND REST FOR THE DAY. IN OGI CITY OF YAMAGUCHI PREFECTURE, THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLO NEEOLES IS OBSERVEO ON THE OAY OF KOSHIN. IT IS A DAY WHERE TAILORS AND OTHER TRADESMEN GATHER UP OLO NEEDLES AND FLOAT THEM OUT TO SEA. (FROM THE EVENTS OF THE YEAR IN THE OUTER PROVINCES)

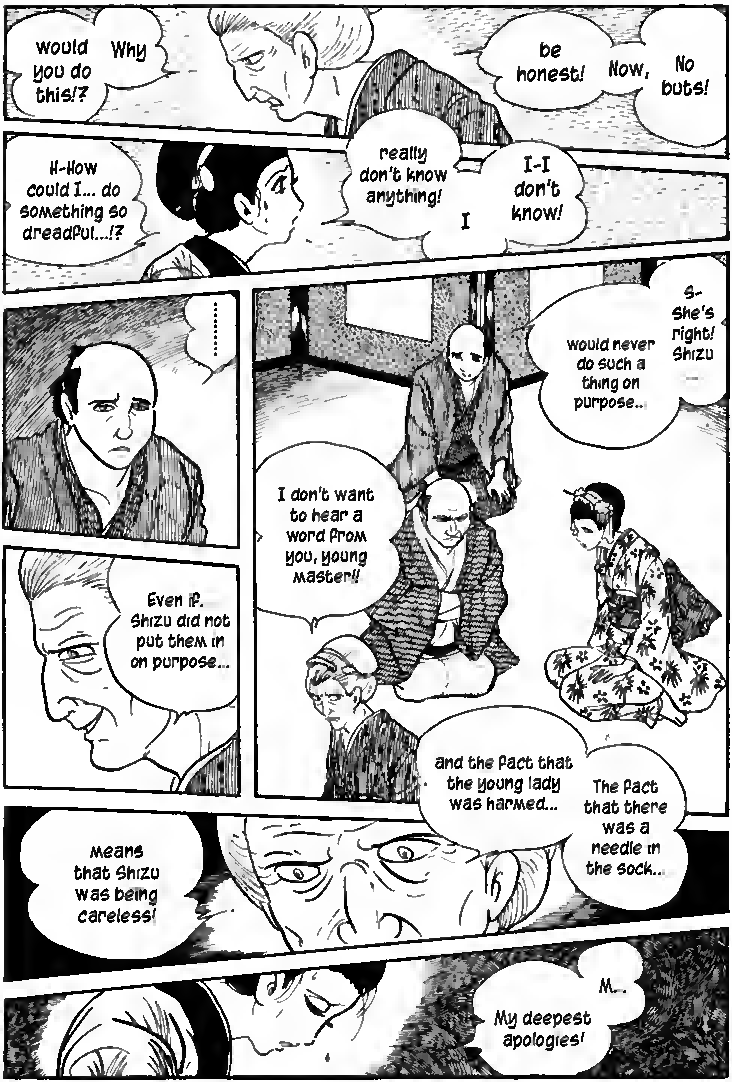


AIEEEEEEEE!


What?
What's wrong?
There was a needle...
in the young lady's sock!
Who would do such a thing...?
Who... is in charge of her socks!?
Shizu the Maid!
Shizu...!!

And... placed them in this young woman's sock!
So Shizu stole them!
.. I knew there were some needles missing...
N-No, I... d-didn't do anything!
Trust me!!

the only one who handles the young lady's garments.. is you!!
The only one who touches the needles.
and...
Don't try and play coy with me!
B-But..

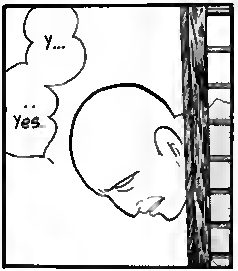

Why would you do this!?
Now, be honest!
No buts!
I-I don't know!
I really don't know anything!
H-How could I... do something so dreadful...!?
S-She's right! Shizu would never do such a thing on purpose...
.....
I don't want to hear a word from you, young master!!
Even if Shizu did not put them in on purpose...
The fact that there was a needle in the sock...
and the fact that the young lady was harmed...
Means that Shizu was being careless!
M... My deepest apologies!

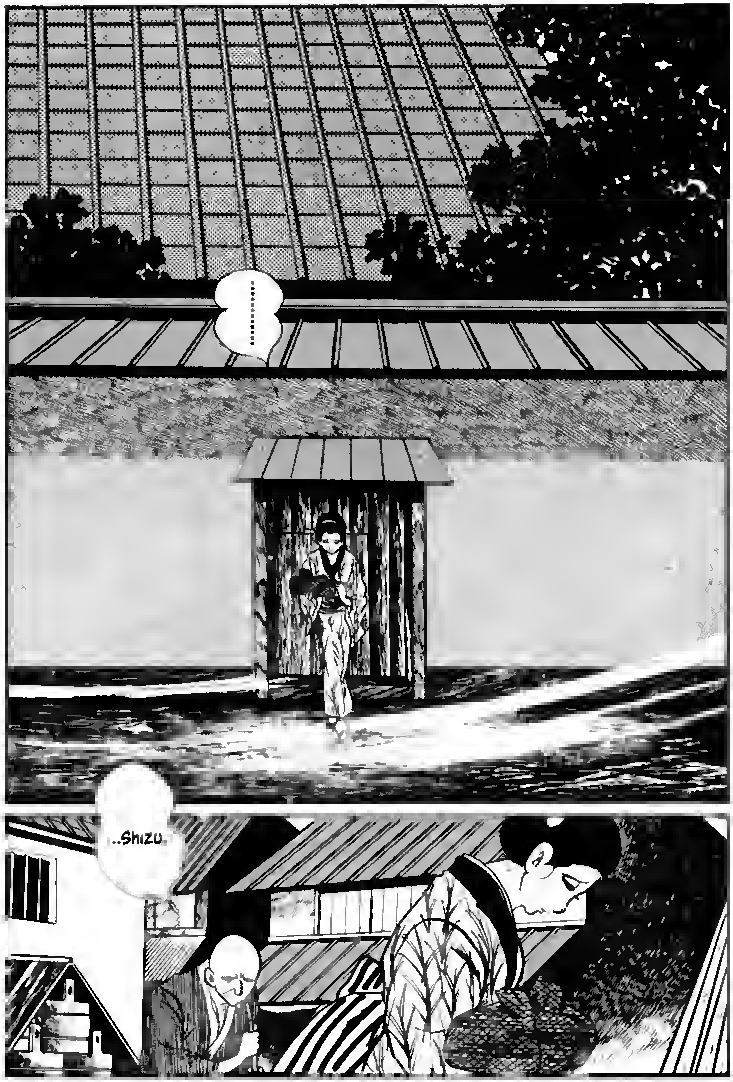
.....
The young lady may have even died!
If the needle broke while it was inside her skin
You expect an apology to be enough!?
...What should we do, Master?
But Father,
t- that's too .
She will be dis- charged!
.. We must set an example for the others.
Huh!?

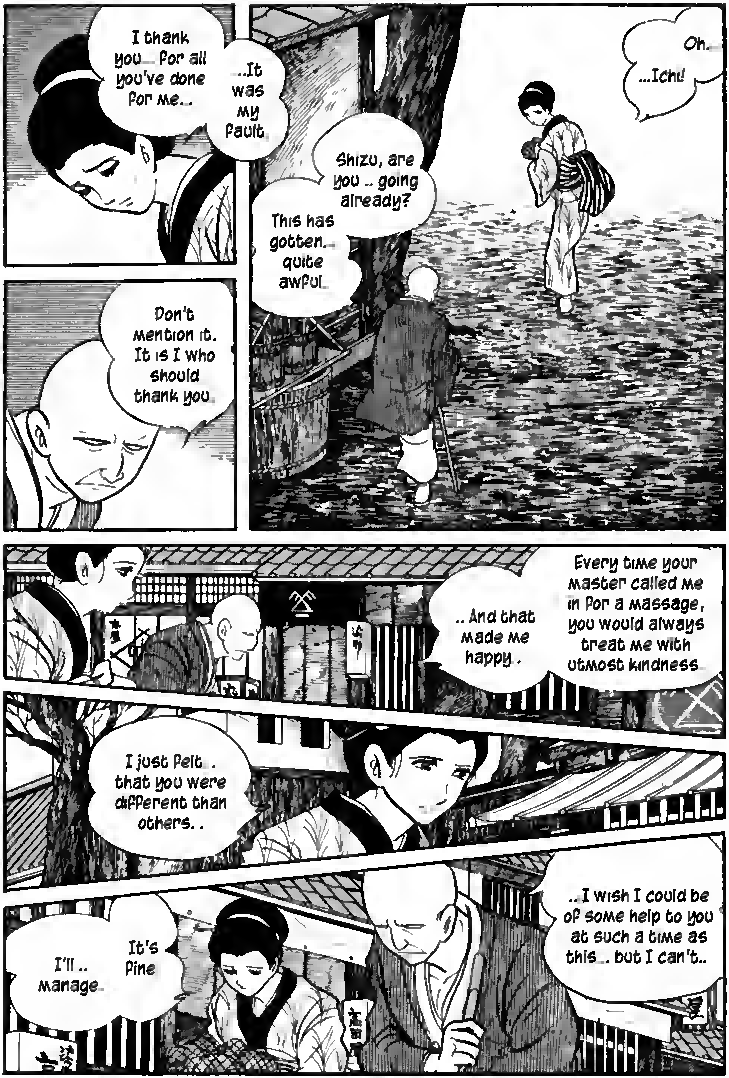
E... Excuse me, sir ..
This may not be the place for an outsider like me to talk ..
And it isn't, Ichi!

I'm sorry, but... I forbid you to interfere with the rules of this household!

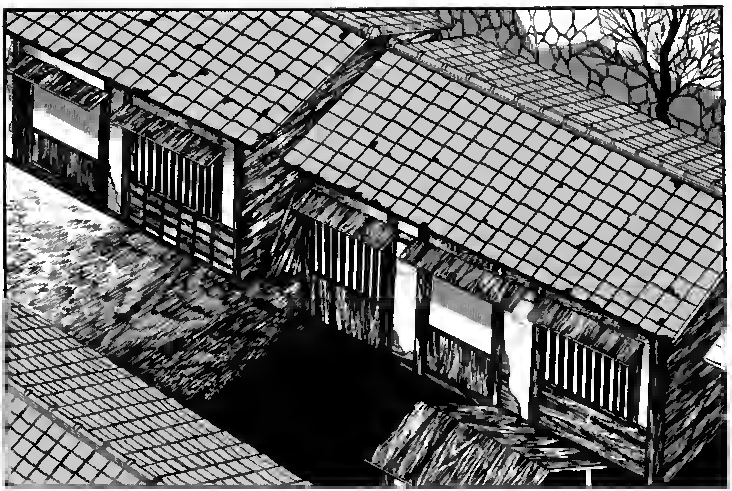
Shizu put a needle in the young lady's sock..!?
I always felt that girl was gloomy... I never liked her!
She thinks that her being pretty.. gives her an excuse to eye the young master...
And she's gotten full of herself!
She's so petty...
She's jealous! She and the young lady are mistress and servant, though they're the same age ..

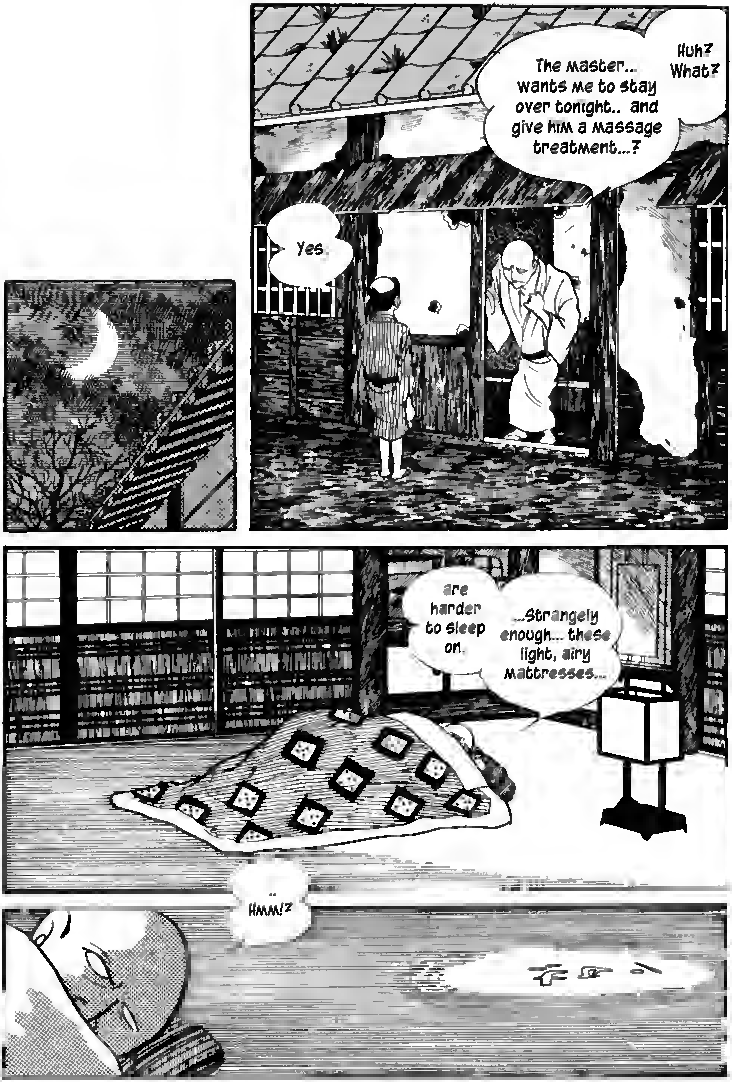

Y...
..
Yes.

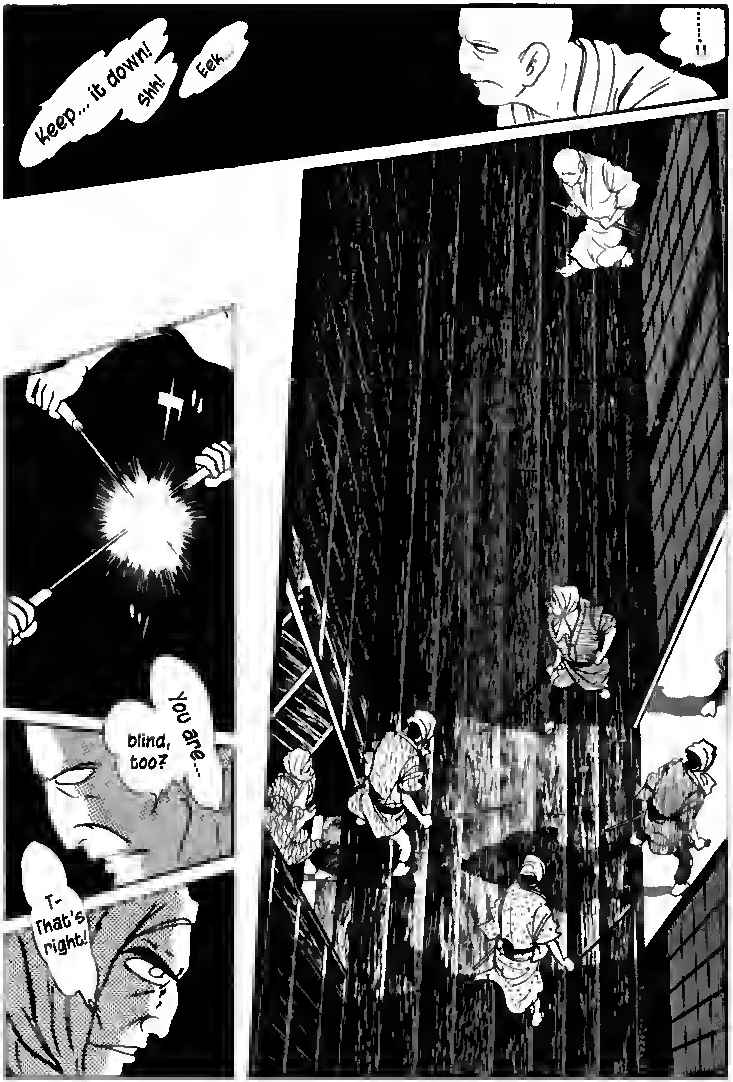

..Shizu..


I thank you... For all you've done for me...
...It was my fault.
Oh...
...Ichi!
Shizu, are you .. going already?
This has gotten... quite awful.
Don't mention it. It is I who should thank you.
Every time your master called me in for a massage, you would always treat me with utmost kindness.
.. And that made me happy .
I just felt . that you were different than others. .
..I wish I could be of some help to you at such a time as this .. but I can't..
It's fine
I'll .. manage.

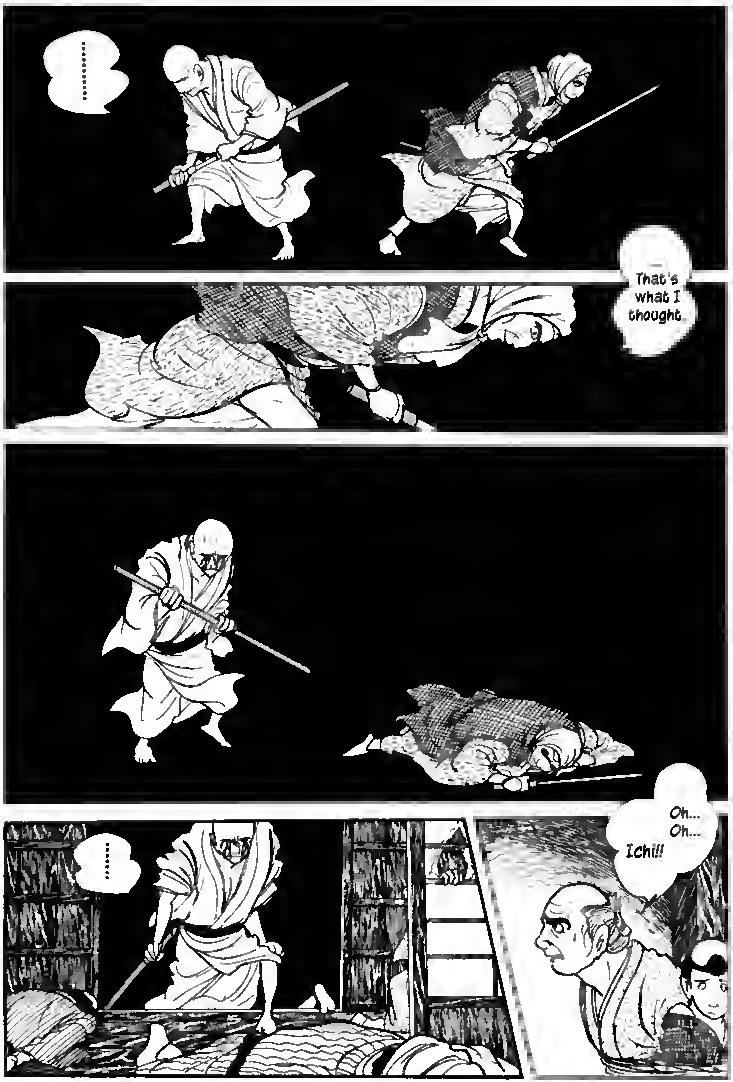
I have a brother in Shinjuku.
I will stay with him for a while...
Do you have any ideas of where to go?
I did hear that you were giving some man an allowance
Oh, now that you mention it...
Ichi, I must be off...
...Well,
...Yes
If there's anything I can do for you... Feel free to stop by my place...
Oh, Shizu,
Well...
Yes, please do.
Fare-well then.
I may... drop by once I've settled down...
Yes. Thank you very much.
.....




Huh? What?
The master... wants me to stay over tonight.. and give him a massage treatment...?
Yes.
...Strangely enough... these light, airy mattresses...
are harder to sleep on.
..Hmm!?

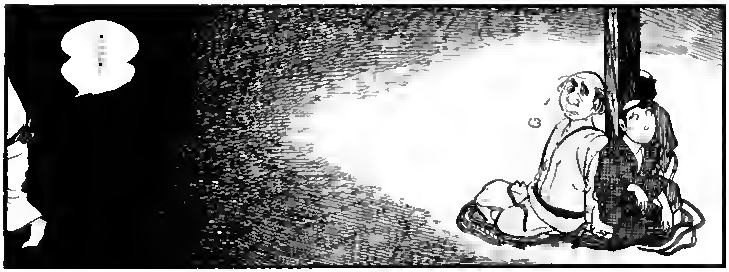

Keep... it down!
Shh!
Eek...
T-That's right!
You are... blind, too?

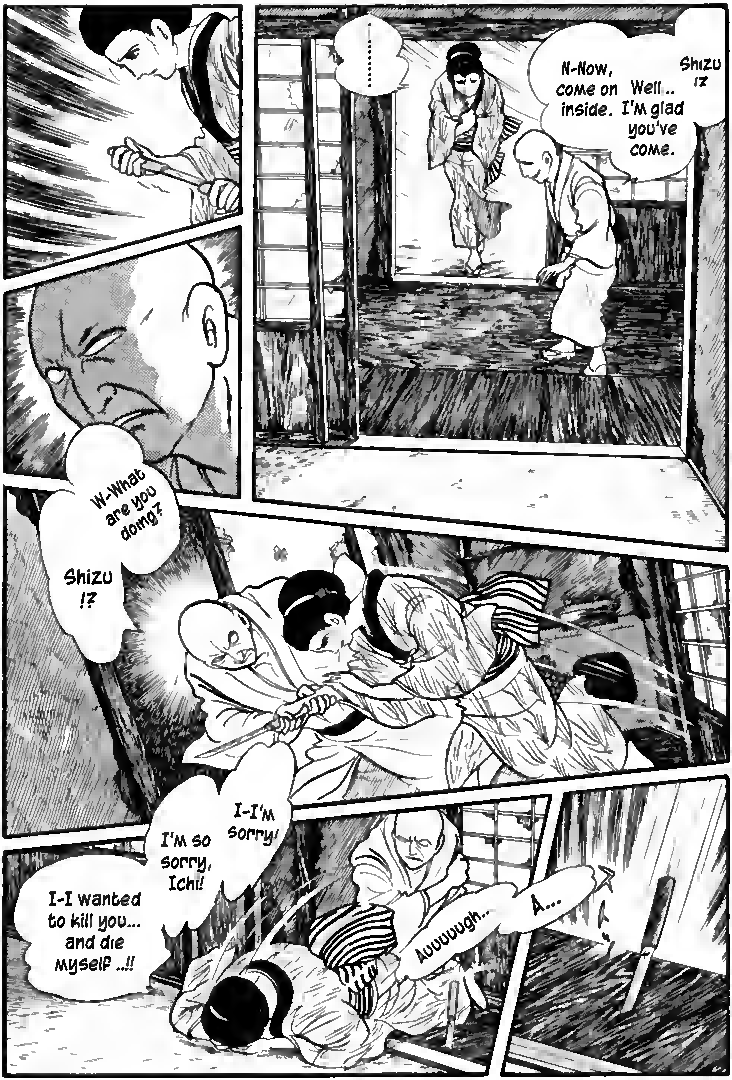
...This means we can both fight... without holding anything back!
.....
...I suppose that you, too... learned the sword ... because you didn't want to be ridiculed?


.....
That's what I thought.
.....
Oh... Oh... Ichi!!

You called me here... because you knew this would happen, didn't you!?
Sir,
It's a good thing... I had you... stay the night!!
I thank you
I-I received a message yesterday...
...Y-Yes, it's true...
.....
N-No, of course not!
That's out of... the question...
S-So... I felt bad about it, but I had you...
A-And they threatened to set my house on fire if I went to the guardhouse...
T-They said they'd break in within two or three days...
You could've mentioned that from the start if that was the case...
Hmpf
N... Now untie us...!
I will repay this gratitude and apology in full later...
With the situation at hand... I forgot to tell you...
I'm sorry
I apologize...

First, one more thing...
About Shizu...
...I want to know the name... of the real culprit who put a needle in the young lady's sock!
But it's obvious... B-!
did... that Shizu...
...I-I commanded Kikuno the wet nurse to do it...
I-I want you to understand, Ichi!
A mere maid cannot be the bride... of my only son and heir!
...I see.
So Shizu and the young master were getting too intimate,
...so you set this up to drive her away!
.....




Shizu iz
N-Now, come on inside.
Well... I'm glad you've come.
W-What are you doing!?
Shizu !?
I-I'm sorry!
I'm so sorry, Ichi!
I-I wanted to kill you... and die myself ..!!
Auuuugh...
A...

Why!?
Why?
B...Because... The blind man that you killed... was my brother!!
W-
What!?
My one and only... brother!!
Sob...Sob...
He was furious
...W-When my brother heard that I had been discharged...
was the leader of the Needle Men... the gang that caused an uproar in Edo long ago!
...Yes, my brother...
So he gathered up his old friends...
heard that from Boss Saheiji... afterwards...
I-I had...

My brother... used the needles that he learned to use when he was young—
and started doing evil, and in no time at all, he had gathered friends and committed appalling break-ins and murders...
B... But
For the past four or five years... he had washed his hands of them... at my request...
and he had lived an honest life... A-And yet...!
A-All for a needle again...!!
Again?
A... Aooo-ugh..
I-It was... all my fault!!
Everything is my fault!

..When we were young..
I was playing with needles, and I..
caused my brother to go blind!
...I thought my brother hated me for it...
...So I kept sending him money..
...But I guess... that this time... he did it for me...
.....

IN THE KANTO REGION, THERE ARE PLACES THAT OBSERVE THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLO NEEOLES ON FEBRUARY 8TH, AND PLACES THAT OBSERVE IT TWICE, ON THE 8TH OF DECEMBER ANO FEBRUARY.

IN IWAKI OISTRICT OF FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURE, THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLD NEEDLES IS OBSERVED ON THE 8TH OF OECEMBER AND FEBRUARY, AND ON THIS DAY THEY ABHOR THE USE OF NEEOLES. (FROM THE STUOY OF THE COUNTRYSIOE, PART 3 OF 7)

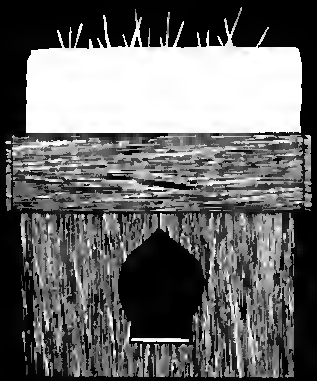
IN SADO, IT IS SAIO THAT BALLOONFISH GATHER UPON THE BEACH ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE TWELFTH MONTH, AND SOME GATHER THEM ON THIS DAY TO WARO OFF EVIL. (FROM THE EVENTS OF THE YEAR IN SADO)

ONE CAN SKEWER TOFU WITH AN OLO NEEOLE ANO FLOAT IT DOWNSTREAM IN FEBRUARY, BUT THERE ARE NO BALLOONFISH IN FEBRUARY.

IN ASHIYA TOWN, ONGA OISTRICT, FUKUOKA PREFECTURE, OECEMBER 8TH IS SAIO TO BE A DAY WHEN NEEDLEO BLOWFISH CALLEO "HARIBOKU" COME ASHORE.

THERE MAY BE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS AND THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLD NEEDLES, BUT IT IS ASSUMEO THAT THE DECEMBER SERVICE CAME FIRST. (FROM TRAVELS, 9 OF 12)

OECEMBER 8TH: MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR OLO NEEDLES



佐武と市捕物控⑩　七福神

小学館文庫

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〔検印廃止〕

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SABU & ICHI
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